# INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

## Changing Profiles

**Bimal Mukherjee**

WEST BENGAL STATE MUSIC ACADEMY

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## Changing Profiles

Bimal Mukherjee

LORD

WEST BENGAL STATE MUSIC ACADEMY
36 Anwar Shah Road
Calcutta 700 033

First Published on October 1989
© West Bengal State Music Academy
Jacket design : Shamindra Bhowmick

Published by
Shri A K Dutta
Director of Culture
Govt. of West Bengal

Printed by
Gita Printers
21 Panchanan Ghosh Lane
Calcutta 9

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## FOREWORD

The West Bengal State Music Academy has, as its principal aim, the nurturing of the precious heritage of our music with a view to concertise and preserve many creations in the genre of music and dance to reaffirm the firm basis and dignity of classicism.

Amongst its manifold activities, the Academy is undertaking publication of writings and books by eminent musicologists, authors and artists, apart from building up a representative library of records, books, video cassettes, gramophone records and the like.

To awaken intelligent understanding of the present scenario of classical music, our heritage and responsibilities, the Academy has great pleasure in publishing the present book by Shri Bimal Mukherjee, eminent Sitar player of national repute, musicologist, author and a senior member of the IAS now retired. He is also a Vice Chairman of this Academy. The book contains several rare photographs of master musicians which one rarely comes across these days.

This is the Academy's first publication in English for all India circulation, the contents of the book being related to the major facets of classical music which would be of interest to music-lovers and students alike of the country as a whole. The book is an engaging discussion on Indian classical music with reference to its past, present and indications for the future and covers several lively and burning issues.

The views expressed in the book, however, are entirely those of the author himself. The Academy would like to see proper dissemination of the book amongst Institutions, organisations and music lovers throughout the country.

Calcutta
3 October, 1989

**Manas Mukherjee**
Member-Secretary,
West Bengal State Music Academy,
Govt. of West Bengal

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# PREFACE

This is a book on Hidustani Classical Music...a Study and Analysis of its major facets with an attempt to profile the rapid and sometimes breathtaking which have and are overtaking it.

Although I have been a civil servant belonging to the IAS for long thirty five years, classical music and its uninterrupted practice in the face of tremendous odds has been a serious affair with me. Paradoxical as it may sound, having been born in a non-professional musical family, I have had the privilege of going through almost the same rigorous *talim* and grinding which the boys of the professional families usually go through. In present day parlance it can legitimately be held against me that I have not had the necessary degree of exposure as a performing artist but I am sure that I have had that much of exposure and performance of a quality that gives an artist something of an All India reputation. More importantly, a ringside view of the musical scene for over forty years or so has given me an insight into the inner workings in the field of music which should be shared with friends, known and unknown, who are variously interested in classical music. I have, in my own humble way, said quite a few things which often do not appear in print and are not discussed openly or seriously. It is only a form of loud thinking without meaning offence to anyone.

The sole objective of this work is only to stimulate and provoke thinking on some of the major facets to be able to appreciate what is really happening and which way we are going. Our classical music has tremendous resilience and I, for one, am certain that all the shocks and brinkmanship it is being made to go through will neither damage or destroy it except creating a few aberrations here and there. For the dedicated and inward looking musicians time has come for some quiet introspection and heart searching. Let us concede that fun, fame and wealth are not the be all and end all of our musical heritage or strivings of mortals like us. We have our responsibilities also. Are we fulfilling them? Are we really trying to demonstrate to the world that the music we have has a base to stand upon, a scientific system and rich tradition behind it? Do we respect the enormous sacrifice, restraint and farsightedness of the great masters of the past which have brought our music to this noble and sublime level?

Our effort has been to be objective. Self criticism and introspection are part of self imposed penance. And music involves all this and much more. The present has come out of the past and the future will come out of the present. We must work for revival and constructive innovation. Art must be preserved and also developed and carried forward.

My grateful thanks are due the State Music Academy for kindly publishing this book and to the printers for the care they took in printing it. The book contains rare photographs of old masters which are not commonly seen these days.

181, B Block,
Lake Town, Calcutta 89.
3 October, '89

**Bimal Mukherjee**

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Despite predisposition in India's favor [ favour ], I have to acknowledge that Indian music took me by surprise. I knew neither its nature nor its richness, but here, if anywhere, I found vindication of my conviction that India was the original source.
Melodically and rhythmically Indian music long ago achieved a complex sophistication which only in the twentieth century, with the work of Barto'k and Stravinsky, has Western music begun to adumbrate.

—YEHUDI MENUHIN

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From his book *Unfinished Journey*

*The man that hath no music in himself,*
*Nor is not mov'd with concord of sweet sound,*
*Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;...*
*Let no such man be trusted.*

*—Shakespeare*

# Section A
## My Musical Lineage & Background

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# CHAPTER 1

# MY MUSICAL LINEAGE

It is quite a natural event for a professional or 'gharanadar' musician to be born into a family of musicians dating back to several generations. For an amateur musician, however, it is simply a matter of good fortune to be born into a family of high brow non-professional musicians. This is exactly what happened in my case and the unique feature is that in addition to academic studies and extra curricular activities, the learning or talim and practice of music had to be done as in the professional music families. More than perhaps talim and the grinding, it was a passion and intense love for music which I had the good fortune of inheriting from both my parents. And when passion and perspiration combine, surely music blossoms brighter than in cases when talim and riyaz form part of the drudgery of life.

This unique trait has run through our family. My revered father the Late Amulya Chandra Mukherjee, a totally selfmade man, who ran away from home at the tender age of just 13 years, turned out to be a scholar, professor, literateur, and administrator and to crown it all a musician of great depth and learning. My mother the Late Binapani devi, outwardly an unpretentious housewife, was a singer of intense quality and in the company of my father went through the rounds of musical talim and learning from great Ustads and masters.

Brought up in such an ethos, I inherited music as it were and over the years in my student days and later in my official career music became something of a heritage which cast upon me a responsibility and duty not only to keep it up but to enrich it and carry it forward.

All this happened in the former princely state of Baroda in Western India where my father started life as a professor of Mathematics and ended up as Naib Dewan ( Executive Councillor ) of the state spanning a period of over 38 years. A person of my father's versatility soon caught the fancy of that great ruler and maker of modern Baroda the Late Sir Sayayi Rao Gaikwad who was attracted by a Professor of Mathematics presiding over literary seminars and pursuing music under great masters. He picked him up early enough and groomed him up for higher administrative responsibilities. Sir Sayayi Rao soon made him President of the Committee set up to examine and screen musicians from all over India to decide, who amongst them could be presented before the Royal family for performance. From the time I was a toddler musician of all colours, and hues came to our house and the palace musicians which included the legendary Ustad Jamaluddin Khan Binkar, the vocal maestro Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Smt. Laxmee Bai Jadhav, Ustad Fida Hussain Khan who were all familiar faces in our household.

The Author & his Ustad at the Ganda Bandhan Ceremony
[ Baroda ]

At the age of just 5 or 6 years, my training in Vocal music started and went up to my 19th year. In this training, I was inducted into the Jaipur and Agra gayaki and by the time I was 13 years of age my talim in Sitar started first at the hands of my father and later under Ustad Abid Hussain Binkar. My father was himself trained by great masters like Pundit Pashupati Missir ( Varanasi ) of the legendary Prasaddu Manohar gharana of Varanasi and Nepal and by Ustad Jamaluddin and Abid Hussain Binkars. The latter also taught my mother Vocal music—such beautiful

Ustad Jamaluddin Khan Binkar
[ Jaipur & Baroda ]

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bandishes spanning from Dhrupads, Khayals, Hori, Thumri and Bhajans. During my formative years, I had the unique privilege of receiving guidance from Ustad Faiyaz Khan (a great admirer of my father with however a friendly grudge against my Binkar Ustad's family due to the latter's greater access to the palace and the royalty).

Pandit Pashupati Missir [ Varanasi ]

When I was in my teens, I had the rare honour of playing Sitar before a distinguished audience headed by Ustad Faiyaz Khan, other great musicians and music lovers. When I was just sixteen years of age, Pundit Onkar Nath Thakur living in Surat invited me to play in Surat and was gracious enough to present me with a beautiful Sandalwood box which had not lost its fragrance even after twenty five years. Two other unique events occured soon thereafter. The great maestro Ustad Allauddin Khan in one of his visits to Baroda came all the way to our house to hear my Sitar ( particularly Raga Alap ) having come to know that an outstanding Binkar of Jaipur gharana was training me up in Sitar. How big hearted that grand old maestro was ? Having heard alap in Todi for an hour, he blessed me and said with a saintly smile that the foundations had been truly laid through the right talim and the future lay in pursuing the art with dedication and devotion. The great Ustad was accompanied by Pundit Ravi Shankar then a bright young man of 26 years or so. At the age of 17 years, I broadcast Sitar recitals from All India Radio, Bombay and the Baroda State Radio.

The Author in concert with Ustad Keramatullah Khan

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Without going into great details, this was the story of my initiation and talim in music in my childhood and adolescense. By the grace of the lord Almighty, I was doing fairly well in my academic studies, having created a record by matriculating at the age of 13 years and later graduating with Economics Honours at the age of 17 in 1947 and becoming a College Fellow in recognition of academic excellence. My father was keen that I should enter the Civil Service and so I had to go on studying till I reached the qualifying age. Thus in 1949, I obtained B.Com. (Hons.) and M.A. in 1951. In 1952 I took the IAS Competitive examination from Bombay and was selected. Then started my training in the IAS Training School at Delhi for an year followed by posting to the West Bengal cadre at the instance of Late Dr. B. C. Roy, Chief Minister, perhaps because I had topped amongst Bengali candidates and none had been selected from West Bengal that year.

The Author in childhood with his parents

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At the age of just 23 years, I was literally at the cross roads of my professional and musical career, I went by my father's advice that the real mark of excellence lay in versatility and that if I had music in me, the IAS would not come in the way. This is how I took up the challenge of both serving Independent India as a civil servant and continuing doggedly, with great sacrifice and dedication, the practice of music. I have today left the IAS behind after putting in 35 years of varied and eventful service but music was my constant companion in the toughest of my assignments. Not many would realise how much doing it has taken to maintain and achieve the standards of a top ranking musician as a serving member of the Indian Administrative Service I have seen postings in non-electrified areas, gone without a tabla player for long spells and spent over 16 years in the districts before being posted to Calcutta As a member of the IAS, I had

The Author in a Reception with Ustad Amir Khan, Padma Bhushan, Gyan Prakash Ghosh & Ustad Keramatullah Khan
[ Calcutta—1968 ]

necessarily to maintain a low profile as a performing musician but at the same time keep up as rigorous practice of music as possible. With limited exposure, I had to pay the inevitable penalty of suffering an eclipse from the world of concerts and conferences except appearances in radio and national programmes. But in this 'bad bargain', I had the great advantage of keeping up high and catholic standard in musical performance unlike many professionals who found themselves driven to dilute and even cheapen their music to win easy audience applause, secure more concert bookings and raise their earnings. The discerning listeners even today are gracious enough to give me a high rating as a classical performer and value the chastity integrity and catholicity of my performances. Art after all must not be a crowd catcher only but take us to sublime heights. This perhaps has been the greatest blessing which the IAS has conferred upon me that I never had to adjust my art to cover up the uncertainties and vagaries of the earnings of professional artists for a large part of their musical career.

And so in brief stints I started writing about music, penning stray thoughts, reminiscing on musical masters, commenting upon the present state of the art of classical music and making suggestions here and there to improve the existing state of affairs. Not that this in any manner influenced the train of events or bring about changes but it certainly set the more serious and dedicated lovers of music thinking. That perhaps will be the greatest reward of my present labours. Our music is a great and sacred heritage which carries with it onerous responsibilities as distinct from earning fame and wealth. Our leaders and performers of music must become leaders of musical opinion of knowledge and practices nurtured by a respect for tradition and a desire to innovate creatively and bring refinements without going out of the classical mainstream or ignoring traditions. With these very

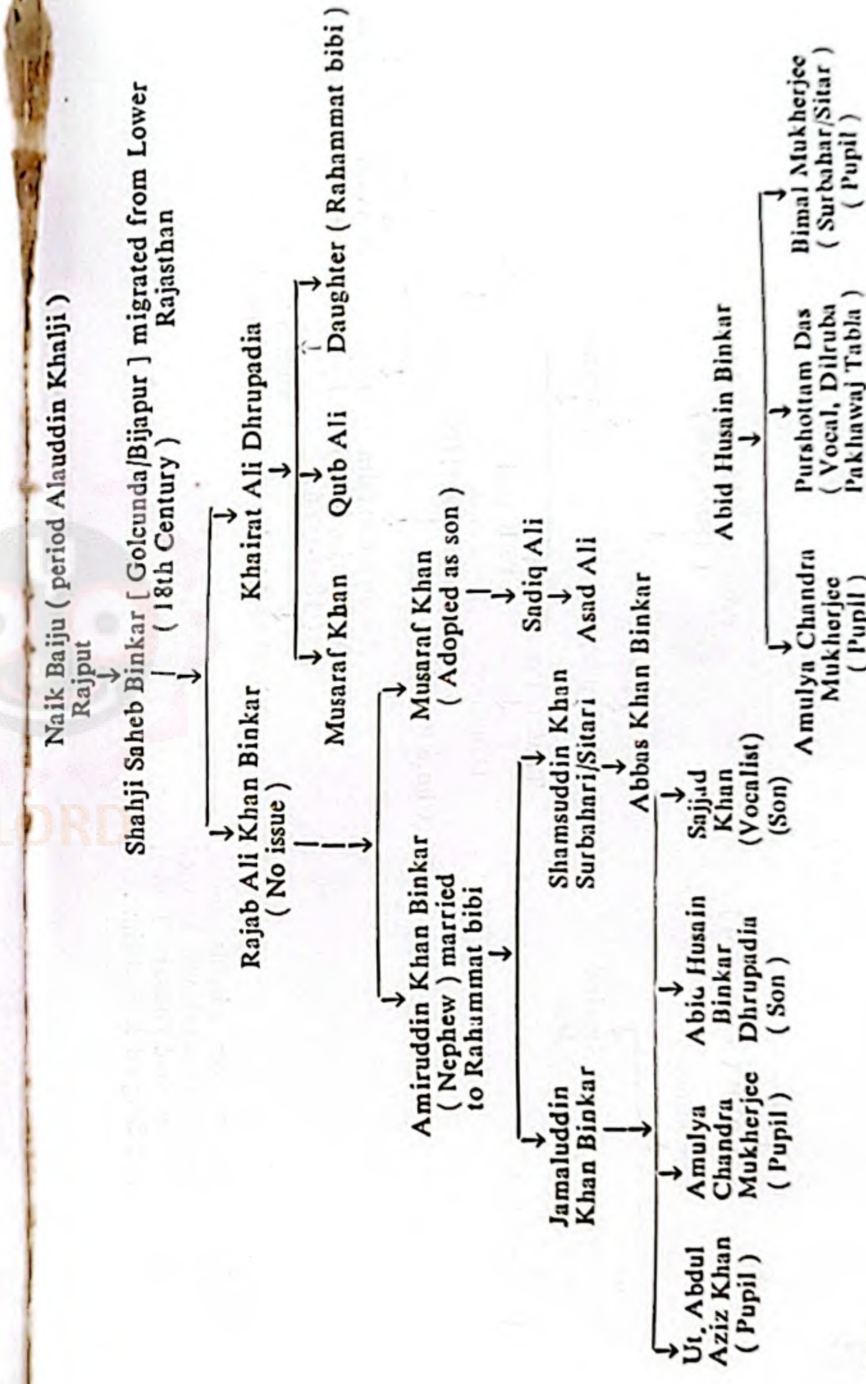
broad objectives, I have profiled some major aspects and areas of our music. I crave the indulgence of the readers for whatever deficiencies may be found but I hope that the articles will make good reading of some sorts.

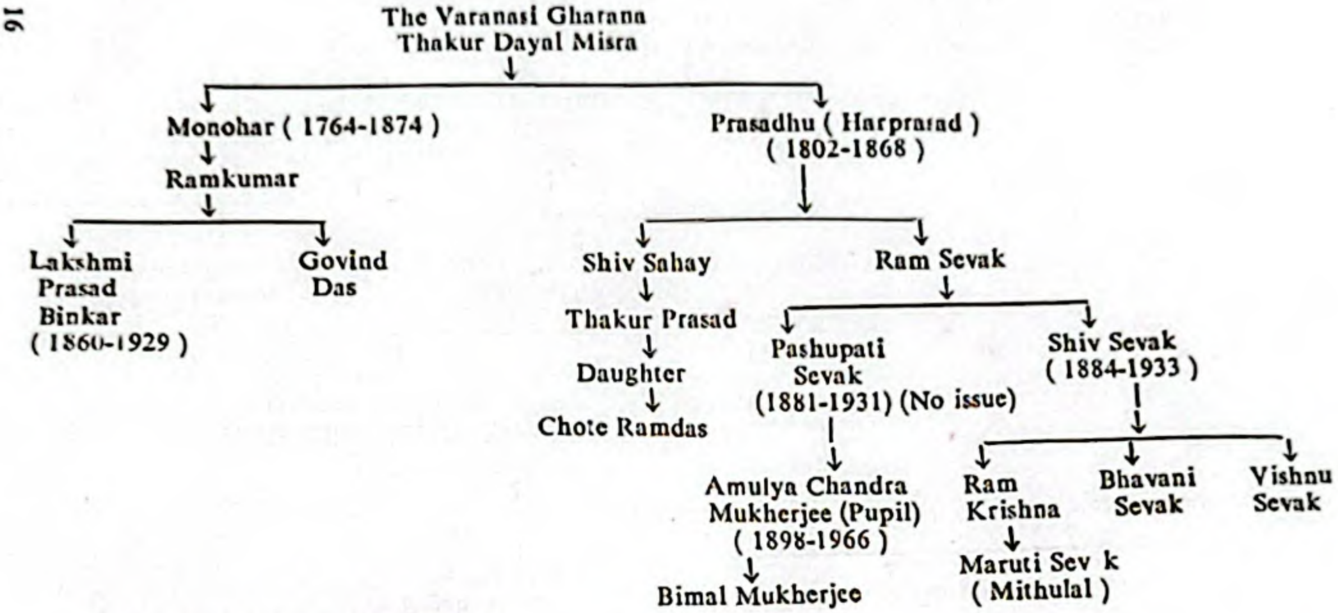
My musical family tree is appended in two parts. In the first the musical lineage from the Binkar-Dhrupadia gharana of Jaipur/Baroda has been shown. In the second the lineage from the great Varanasi gharana of vocalists, Surbahar and Sitar players has been shown.

It has been my great good fortune not only of having inherited some of the traditions of Jaipur and Varanasi gharanas but also the rare privilege of receiving guidance from the Agra gharana maestro Ustad Faiyaz Khan in the advanced years of his life. For a Sitar player in my position, it has been a training of great value both musically and culturally. However humble and small we might be it must be said that some of the high brow amateur musicians coming from non professional musical families are in their own way the torch bearers of some of our musical traditions. This is a point which is quite conveniently ignored these days and that is why a specific mention here has been made as a matter of necessity.

As I mentioned earlier, music has run through our family. Apart from my parents, my elder brother Amal Mukherjee, now well settled in life, had taken to vocal music having learnt in childhood from masters of Agra gharana of Baroda and later from Ustad Ata Hussain and Ustad Sharafat Hussain at Calcutta. Ustad Sharafat Hussain had once told me in mid sixties that my elder brother, both in his voice and talim, had come up so well that if a curtain were put in between him and my elder brother, it would be difficult for a listener to say on which side Sharafat Khan was singing. My brother's musical excellence and talent has never been trumpeted and his professional callings proved so onerous that at one point he had to part company with vocal music which called for lot of riyaz, leisure and time. Such was the family from which I have come. It is only proper that at this age, I should share my perceptions of the past and present and my vision and concerns for the future regarding our luminous classical musical system.

The Author in concert at Washington, 1984


Naik Baiju ( period Alauddin Khalji )
Rajput
Shahji Saheb Binkar [ Golcunda/Bijapur ] migrated from Lower Rajasthan
( 18th Century )
Rajab Ali Khan Binkar
( No issue )
Khairat Ali Dhrupadia
Musaraf Khan
Qutb Ali
Daughter ( Rahammat bibi )
Amiruddin Khan Binkar
( Nephew ) married
to Rahammat bibi
Musaraf Khan
( Adopted as son )
Sadiq Ali
Asad Ali
Jamaluddin
Khan Binkar
Shamsuddin Khan
Surbahari/Sitari
Abbas Khan Binkar
Ut. Abdul
Aziz Khan
( Pupil )
Amulya
Chandra
Mukherjee
( Pupil )
Abid Husain
Binkar
Dhrupadia
( Son )
Sajjad
Khan
(Vocalist)
(Son)
Abid Husain Binkar
Amulya Chandra
Mukherjee
( Pupil )
Purshottam Das
( Vocal, Dilruba
Pakhawaj Tabla )
( Pupil )
Bimal Mukherjee
( Surbahar/Sitar )
( Pupil )


The Varanasi Gharana
Thakur Dayal Misra
Monohar ( 1764-1874 )
Ramkumar
Lakshmi Prasad Binkar ( 1860-1929 )
Govind Das
Prasadhu ( Harprasad ) ( 1802-1868 )
Shiv Sahay
Thakur Prasad
Daughter
Chote Ramdas
Ram Sevak
Pashupati Sevak (1881-1931) (No issue)
Amulya Chandra Mukherjee (Pupil) ( 1898-1966 )
Bimal Mukherjee
Shiv Sevak ( 1884-1933 )
Ram Krishna
Maruti Sev k ( Mithulal )
Bhavani Sevak
Vishnu Sevak

**P. S.** Apart from gharana talim, Pashupati Sevak was trained by Mohmad Hussain Binkar in Dhrupad & Surbahar.

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# Section B
# The Current Musical Scenario

# CHAPTER 2

## THE CURRENT STATE OF AFFAIRS.

Lots of claims are made now and then about the phenomenal advancement that has taken place in the practice and propagation of classical music. Equally strong are claims denouncing the abject qualitative deterioration and unpardonable aberrations that have taken place. Otherwise why is it that seasoned artists in the true classical traditions are being accused or given the sobriquet of "old timers, diehards and fundamentalists" ? This just means that the air is not quite clear. A clearer view is possible only if we attempt an objective analysis or portrayal of the present scenario of classical music. This will bring us face to face with very many diverse and opposing view points on some of the burning issues related to classical music. For the sake of convenience we might divide the discussion into certain well defined headings or captions.

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### (A) The Pre Independence Scene and the Post Independence Scene—

Classical music in a high degree of purity and authenticity was in vogue during the thirties and forties. It was clearly an elitist activity, and listening and enjoyment of classical music was confined to selected groups only. From 1910 onwards however, thanks to the persuasive and pioneering efforts of leaders like Bhatkhandeji and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, schools and colleges of music with the tacit support of the rulers and richer sections of music lovers were being established. Alongside, efforts had started to standardise and bring about uniformity in the concept of ragas and compositions and the introduction of notations. What is more, for the first time ( starting with Baroda in 1915 ) music conferences or sammellans began to be organised where the maestros from all the Durbars and other centres were brought together and genuine lovers of music were given the opportunity to listen to classical music at its best. Still, however, the grammar, the parampara, and traditions were left undistrubed, there still were Durbar and chamber concerts and performances in large halls or pandals were still few and far between. More importantly the musicians exercised restraint and kept on their attempt to train listeners to a higher taste. Conversely the listeners also kept an invisible check on the musicians who could not easily turn adventurists or stray out of the classical mainstream even if they wished to. It was common for performances to be punctuated by applauses or frowns and protests if things were not done the right way.

With the advent of independence a sea change took place and for the sake of clarity these farreaching changes should be clearly identified and noted down—

(i) The Princely states and Durbars vanished and with them the long standing infrastructure of classical music, the court musicians, the guru shisya parampara subsisting in the native states. The knowledgeable listeners also slowly disappeared. A major source of patronage, training and propagation by native states (however limited) disappeared.

(ii) A real qualitative change from small chamber concerts to the concert stage and pandals took place to cater to the "demands" for wider public listening.

(iii) Promotion/propagation of music soon bacame a commercial proposition and so emerged a class of professional conference/concert organisers under various names with the blessings of monied interests.

(iv) Industry and Commerce better known as the Corporate Sector, who had no connection with music earlier, woke up to their social responsibilities and with their phenomenal money power took to organising high fee concerts and permitting unpaid admissions to listeners. Apart from helping culture to survive, this helped to improve their public relations and social image and drew the applause of the artists, the listeners and they also came to the favourable notice of government.

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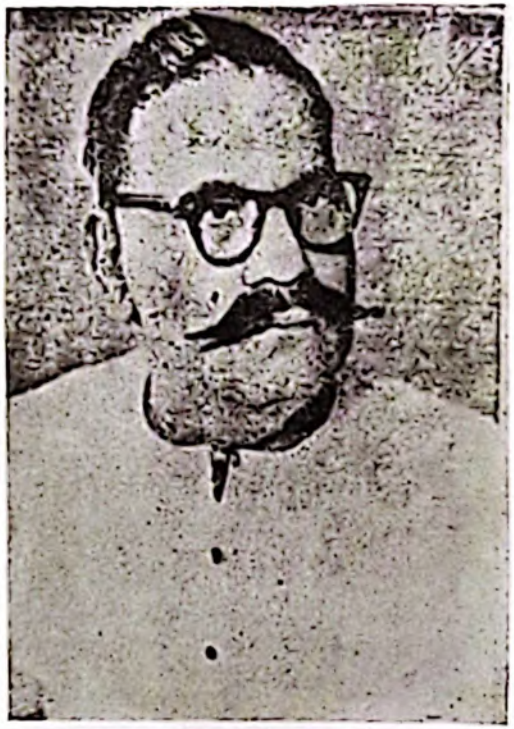
Pundit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar
(Poona-Gwalior gharana, Father of D.V. Paluskar)

(v) The disintegration and dissolution of gharanas come with amazing rapidity as the ethos and changed economic conditions were adverse to their continuance as distinct and separate musical disciplines. Let us understand clearly that the best and topmost artists of today represent only an amalgam of earlier styles stamped, of course, by their individual musical genius and personality. Diversity of styles exemplified in the gharanas slowly disappeared and we have now a fairly standardised style of singing or playing following the style of the commercially successful musicians. It is no use denying this stark reality.



Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (Patiala)

(vi) The new expanding body of listeners has created a new milieu. It is difficult to say whether they created the musicians or the latter created them in the matter of presentation of more acceptable and entertaining music on the concert stage. The earlier "control" exercised by listeners on the performers had been all but lost giving the innovative and adventurist performers great courage and confidence and perhaps some degree of license. Questions such as "purity", conforming to traditions etc. seemed to be irrelevant so long as entertaining and appetising music was available. Those who are mightily happy with this state of affairs rationalise it as the result of "public demand" as if classical music was a commodity subject to the forces of demand and supply. The development, to say the least, is interesting.

Ustad Abdul Karim Khan (Miraj & Kirana)

(vii) One of the major catastrophes to overtake music was the death in quick succession of some of the best known maestros after independence. Earlier in 1936 alone we lost Nasiruddin Dagar, Abdul Karim Khan and Enayet Khan. A landslide set in after 1950 and the maestros we lost in 30/35 years were·······

| | |
|---|---|
| Faiyyaz Khan. | (Baroda) |
| Sawai Gandharva | (Pune) |
| Sadiq Ali Khan | (Lucknow) |
| D. V. Paluskar. | (Pune) |
| Rajab Ali Khan | (Dewas) |
| Moinuddin Dagar | ( Delhi / Calcutta) |
| Omkarnath Thakur. | (Varanasi) |
| Hafiz Ali Khan | (Delhi) |
| Bade Ghulam Ali Khan | (Hyderabad) |
| Allauddin Khan | (Maihar) |
| Ahmed Jan Thirakwa. | (Lucknow) |
| Amir khan. | (Indore / Calcutta) |
| Abid Hussain Khan | (Indore) |
| Kesar Bai Kerkar. | (Bombay) |
| Rasoolan Bai. | (Varanasi) |
| Sidheswari Davi. | (Delhi) |
| Sharafat Hussain | (Delhi) |
| Latafat Hussain | (Bombay / Calcutta) |

It is not being suggested that the old masters should not have died but many of them were good for several years more. Some of us will certainly shed tears on their untimely departure beacuse they were solid links with the past and were great supporters one and all of our heritage and parampara based music ! Any careful observer would see that this vacuum was too large to be filled up and the loss was almost of a permanent nature. How many years shall we have to wait for such a bright galaxy of maestros to reappear on our musical scene ?

(viii) Like the inexorable laws of nature, there has been a rush of new artists to make up for the vacuum. It is no reflection on the calibre and potentiality of the present day artists but it would not be any exaggeration to say that, at their best, they cannot match the depth or brilliance of the great masters we have lost in the last 30 or 40 years. I say this with my deepest respects and regards for the present day stalwarts who are certainly doing their best to keep the torch of our heritage burning.

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**(B) The State of Musical Education and Learning.**

The Guru Shishya Parampara, though on the wane, is continuing here and there but not in any pronounced manner. In fact, one very bold and fairly rewarding experiment to revive the Guru Shishya parampara is on for the last ten years at the Sangeet Research Academy of Calcutta in respect of khayal music with substantial financial support from one of Indian corporate giants. It has taken a lot of doing and is an excellent example for others to emulate. But to revive the institution of Guru Shishya parampara and put it on a firm footing, to make oral transmission of learning a responsibility willingly accepted by established gurus, we shall need many more of such organisations. The SRA has

Pundit Kumar Gandharua ( Dewas )

certainly been a pioneer in the field and besides all this has done yeoman service in propagating authentic music and taking music to the interior and far corners of the country where music lovers rarely have the opportunity to listen to eminent artists. Apart from awakening interest and love for classical music, this is very much a part of musical education though not of the formal type.

Musical Education otherwise now largely rests with various Universities having faculties of performing Arts or departments of music, some premier institutions like Ghandharva Mahavidyalaya ( started by Paluskar ) and Bhatkhande College of Music of Lucknow. Music as a profession has a higher reputation now for practioners and is slowly turning into a form of business. This is why there has been a mushrooming of various Schools / Institutes of all types teaching music. Then there are some Boards and Samities spread all over the country like informal non teaching Universities which, however, conduct examinations all over and give certificates / diplomas / visharad to the successful candidates. While this is spreading the culture of music, no penetrating study has been made into the working and results of the system. Knowledgeable people are of the view that they have achieved little and have in fact assumed the form of a business racket. Strangely enough, the Government is not inclined to look into the system, its working and the net impact it is having on musical education and propagation. No worthwhile performer has emerged out of the system and the certificates have largely served as passports to employment as teachers in recognised or non descript institutions.

Even in regard to the Universities and well established institutions, it has to be said that not many good performers have been produced. But the real good thing that has happened is that education has been standardised, the basics

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and nuances of the system have been learnt and this will produce a snow balling effect on serious listening and evaluation of performances over a period of time. The basic drawback is that students moving up on the wrungs of classes, have to learn from different teachers with diverse back-ground, voice and training. It is really difficult to see how an artist will be created in this system unless the student himself is a gifted sythesiser.

Pundit V. N. Bhatkande ( Musicologist )

The most important point however is that an effort has to be made to induct the boys and girls into musical teaching at the School stage itself. This is a basic recommendation of the curriculum committee set up by U. G. C. on performing Arts of which the author had the privilege of being a member. We do not want all students to take to music as a career. But induction into the basics and rules of musical system is best given at the early stages when the student's mind is both plastic and keenly receptive. It should be left to the attitude and free choice of the students to decide whether or not they will pursue the study of music at the University level and take music as their profession in future.

### (C) The State of listening of Music

Along with phenomenal extension of concerts / conference opportunities, listening also has expanded considerably. The listeners represent a motley crowd :—(1) Those who just love to hear music and do not understand much (2) Those who are trained as good listeners from the past (3) Those who are fans of specified 'star performers' and leave the concert as soon their performances are over (4) Those who are camp followers of established artists whose job is to keep watch on goings on and how the audience responds to music of other artists (5) Those whose secret interests lie only in showmanship, bouts with tabla players, high speed performances and show of virtuosity. The hard truth is that the number of these listeners who have little or no patience with the slower movements and nuances of raga music is rapidly on the increase and so the real classical performers of the best traditions are in danger of being edged out of the concert stage where "mass" listening is going on. Many people today feel that the devoted support of such listeners and organisers have converted a group of just second rate performers into "star" performers.

If, however, we recede to the Chamber Concert form of music we still do come across serious music presented by artists and listening by discerning people and sometimes the conneisseurs whose tribe has, sadly enough, been struck down by the new system. Who is bothered about their praise or frown ? Who cares for sublime music which is now drowned in the noisy, near riotous and erotic music so well patronised these days ?

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Smt. Moghu bai Kurdikar
(Bombay—Mother of Kisori Amonkar pupil of Alladia Khan)

We are committed to the system of majority rule in politics. Can it be different in music ? Where all else is so different, will music survive as the only island of chastity and virtue ? One feels a little unpleasant to have to put these heart searching questions. But, dear readers, how long shall we shut our eyes to the sordid realities and live in a world of make-believe ?

### (D) The State of Presentation of Music

Independent India, almost inevitably, has thrown up a new set of music promoters, organisers, patrons backed by the might of government but more definitely and surely by the money power of the Corporate giants. Gone are the days of selective patronage of the erstwhile Maharajas and Nawabs. We have now huge concerts/Utsavs/Festivals which combine music promotion, public relations, product promotion, selective grooming of chosen artists, heavy media and press coverage, and above all "mass" listening by varied and motley audiences. Whatever the professions might be, sublime music cannot and is perhaps not meant to be presented and promoted in these huge functions. It has to be very clearly understood that presentation of music in such gatherings really calls for not only riyaz but preparations of a special type, music of a type that will be readily accepted and appreciated, music specially tailored to accommodate artistic and power packed tabla and rythmic accompaniment. Catholicity, restraint and following time honoured traditional method of presentation including the choice of melodies are finally not of any great relevance. On one side we have the performers lined up for entertaining and innovative performances and on the other a vast group of listeners awaiting this presentation with almost a baited suspense and longing. At every turn, both sides look out for some suspense, some surprise, some twists and the inevitable bouts or better known as "spin offs" with the drummer. A discerning watcher must watch both the sides carefully to understand what is going on. The finale or concluding part is one of great speed or tayyari to which the performer has accustomed himself by rigorous practice of years. The listeners have got so used to such endings that nothing else will really satisfy them. The long and short of the whole thing is a series of standardised and stereotyped recitals whether vocal or instrumental. The appetite for something new and exciting all the time has become so strong, that loyalty to silsila or tradition is becoming less and less relevant for both the performers and the listeners.

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Earlier on, the artists usually trained the listeners to a higher taste, to the refinements and nuances of raga music both during vistar and layakari. With the passing away of very many masters, the few leading musicians cleverly sized up the new situation. They started titilating the audience with lighter stuff rubbing off the serenity of classical music to which we have referred in the chapter on gharanas. Later they said that the audience wanted all this, and still later the new promoters coined a new phrase on commercial analogy—"audience demand". What a marvellous travestry of truth ? Never, never in the long history of music the listeners wanted the cheapening or denigration of music and made such absurd demands on the performing artists. In this nefarious game, the clever amongst the performers had, what may be described as, a vast body of musically untrained illiterate listeners who were actually "defenceless". They were new to listening of real classical music and the artists used them to their advantage and brought about a new style of music presentation. Such music was often good, intelligently devised, imaginatively presented, intermixed with new innovations and the open minded listeners accepted this music as authentic quite innocently and gracefully. We do not know if loud protests and opposition by persons highly placed in the music world could have arrested or reversed this trend. But apparently, by an irony of fate and circumstances, all opposition, all dissent fell silent. Thus it is how that neo-classicism gained the upper hand and within just 15 or 20 years of independence the really solid and trained band of musicians openly came to be described as "old timers" or "fundamentalists". As a performing musician, I regret to have to say all this. But what answer can logically be given to the million dollar question "Since when has classical music ceased to be classical ?" For a practitioner of classical music is it a sin or crime to be classical ? No one now appears to be bothered with fundamental questions. The philosophy appears to be that nothing succeeds like success and that even classics must ultimately "conform" to what the public wants. This reminds me of the story of a well placed person in politics who was asked, during a controversy, which side he belonged to. After a small pause, he promptly replied that he was with the side which "would" be in the majority. In short, we are reaping the result of unchecked populism in classical music. Money has come into music with benefits of fame, wealth and awards for the artists. Which intelligent artist will take the risk of being introspective, inward looking except at his own peril ?

A rather critical and pessimistic view has been presented above. In all fairness the brighter features must also be mentioned. Inspite of the changed atmosphere there has been the emergence of fresh and brilliant talent reminiscent of old maestros. Many highly educated musicians have taken to music as their profession. Quite a few of the celebrities who are old timers have stuck to the traditional norms. Only a few of the well known artists have tended to be excessively innovative and sometimes adventurist. One still hears really good recitals on the concert stage today. Nothing is lost in art and with its excellent resilience, classical music has shown and will show great retrieval powers. Every major change or transition tends to put our values in the melting pot but soon the forces of revival reappear and things again settle down on an even keel.

## (E) The State of Music Patronage

The Govt. is by far the greatest employer and patron of musicians through its vast network of AIR, Doordarshan, Institutions and centres of a wide variety. It is, however, patronage of a separate type and falls into a class by itself. But for this support untold damage and perhaps total ruination of the musicians would have come about. Whatever may be held against Govt. by way of nepotism and favouritism or yielding to pressure groups, very great opportunities have been provided by the Festivals and Utsavs which, perhaps also form part of an overall strategy to involve the common people with culture and arts in various forms. In a vast country of India's size and diversity, culture and art forms must be seen and consciously exploited as a strong unifying force.

Pundit Onkarnath Thakur
( Surat / Varanasi pupil of Pundit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar )

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The greatest impact however has been that of the Corporate Sector and Industry and Commerce. Concerts at high fees and unpaid admissions to listeners have given easy access to common people to listen to the celebrities time and again. The only trouble perhaps is that we are having a surfeit of concerts practically all the year round and the continued preoccupation of some corporate giants with music and concerts has brought into existence the star system of chosen artists—celebrities no doubt but not always of the high calibre expected of maestros. They are well looked after and constantly promoted. Hardly a dozen or so of the well known musicians operate this star system. To make matters worse, their 'chamchas' now find it possible to strut about and boss over lesser musicians and listeners. Ultimately, as one writer has put it, the nett effect is complete subjugation of the audience backed by never failing eulogistic press support by a new genre of music critics. Lately we have been seeing yet another novel feature namely "Father's Sons," that is young artists and sons of maestros being blown up beyond proportions before they have earned their place as performers. The only pertinent question which no body is prepared to face is—what is going to be the fate of really talented, up and coming artists, who have no godfathers and whose opportunities to prove themselves in concert appearences continue to be slender ?

Similarly, by just contacts, fairly mediocre artists manage to go abroad either through private sources or sometimes as Govt. delegates. One wonders whether only those who can manage, whatever be their calibre, are the legitimate purveyors and ambassadors of our music. Must not the foreigners listen to the really good and authentic music of India ? The Government is surely quite seized about the calibre and standing of artists. Why else does it strictly enforce a gradation system for artists in the radio broadcasts and doordarshan ? Why by the same logic, is the system of screening and gradation not applied in case of artists going abroad ? Is it just a question of free enterprise and success over and over again for a selected band of performers by repeated foreign appearances and a strict shutting out of artists of real merit and calibre because they are artists without influence or pull ?

Ustad Ameer Khan. ( Indore / Kirana gharana )

Someone at the highest level must think over these matters and find some fair way out.

### (F) The Conduct of Performers on the Concert Stage.

Here also no aspersions are meant to be cast on any artist. Nor is it true that what is being stated here applies to all the performing celebrities. They have risen to fame by hard work and gaining a level of maturity and most of their recitals must be rated as being of a high order. This, however, does not apply to all.

A typical picture is something like this. The artist of celebrity arrives or rather his arrival is duly heralded and the audience waiting in baited breath gets a little excited. Before even a note has been sung or played, there is a round of thunderous applause. Sometimes the ragas are announced. Often, however, the artist starts with something unfamiliar—this serves the dual purpose of exhibitionism and controlling the listening crowd. Soon after a few movements, the tempo rises and bouts with the drummer start until there is a maddening finale followed by an outburst of applause. Often some of the supporters and chamchas of the artist carefully positioned in different parts of the audience give "applauses" during the recital and at the end ask for an encore ! The artist then cools down and reluctantly takes up a short piece in some accepted and well known raga and finishes up as early as possible without appearing to be scrappy. Then comes the interval. What follows thereafter is quite the familiar pattern of Bhajans and Dhuns or folk based music, lilting and swaying interspersed with accolades from some of the listeners who had been patiently waiting all this long for this stuff. And so the recital ends.

What is described above is a typical but rather common recital. Once again, it must be said that there are very honourable exceptions where the self-same artists have risen to great heights of melody and music. The point being driven at is that how would the good artist having received proper talim face up to such audiences ? Will he perform traditionally and take the risk being hooted out or take the more expedient path shown by the senior celebrities ? He too has a future and some ambition. This, then is how power-packed music, exciting music full of surprises has gradually superseded and supplanted the music which is sublime and truly classical following time-honoured rules of presentation with enough scope for innovation.

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**Conclusion**

New and novel styles of presentation have come into existence. The nonconformists must gradually suffer extinction from the concert stage though thankfully not from the Radio and Doordarshan where the mood and demands of the audience are automatically relegated to the background and the artist can come to his own.

Music has gained the features of business. There are promoters, and impressarios and the status of performers is directly linked to the fees offered to them. High fees have had a nasty effect on music and the lesser artists are just not called up. Smaller music circles just cannot engage the Star Artists for financial reasons. With the Star system now firmly entrenched, one can only guess what the future of our music will be like.

Music is sought to be popularised. Every art or craft is not for everyone. Music, by its inner impulses, will have to be an elitist activity and its excessive popularisation cannot but lead to its dilution.

One question which disturbs every artist and every lover of music is why is there a total disinclination to openly support and promote artists and the up and coming musicians presenting authentic music ? Surely there is no shortage of money with the advertisers, corporate bodies and large donors in the field. There is clearly no desire' urge or anxiety to patronise authentic music. What a situation have we landed ourselves in where every artist, good bad or indifferent, must find some promoter or godfather or renounce neutrality and musical integrity by joining one or the other of the groups which hold the key to musical success ?

## CHAPTER 3
## THE GHARANAS AND THEIR FUTURE.

It is always with some sense of pride that a performing musician or even a teacher claims that he belongs to this or that famous "gharana" in Vocal or Instrumental music.

Pundit Bhaskar Bua Bakhle. ( Poona )

Speaking rather bluntly, this claim of belonging to a gharana really used to give some "halo" or place of pride to a musician say even a hundred or fifty years ago because his

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performance was a veritable testimony to the discipline, characteristics, style, musical culture, nuances, compositions of the gharana he represented Today we have not many yardsticks left to "weigh up" a musician with reference to his claims of belonging to a gharana. It is now more a

Ustad Nisar Husain Khan. ( Gwalior gharana )

matter of prestige and style to establish one's musical identity by linking it up with some gharana. There is also a craze amongst musicians to establish some connection, however remote, with the Seniya dynasty of Tansen in both vocal and instrumental music. With substantial metamorphosis including admixture of gharanas and styles and the uncertain and unpredictable turns which classical music has been taking and will take under the pressure of numerous powerful forces in future, it may be of some academic interest to examine different facets of gharana music and to see what is left of these gharanas now and in which direction (if any) they are heading in future.

Let us straightaway concede that when, even in this age of hurry, pressure publicity and restlessness, gharana music has not totally lost its value or relevance, there must be some quality in gharana music which (even for outward show) lures the performing musician. This leads us on to an analysis of the concept, rationale and characteristics of gharana music.

Pundit Balkrishna Bua Vaze ( poone )

'Gharana', in common parlance, means a 'family' 'tradition', a group culture etc. In painting, we have certain 'schools' of painting. But there are no gharanas in literature. In music, gharanas are linked up, in the initial stages with a family or families and have an element of family or 'khandani' pride.

For Khayals, the Gwalior gharana, for instance, was associated with names like Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan, Bade Mohammad Khan, the Sahaswan gharana with Mustaque Husain, Fida Husain, Agra gharana with Gulam Abbas, Faiyaz Khan, Jaipur gharana with Alladia Khan, Rajabali Khan, Mohammed Khan, the Patiala gharana with Alia Fattu and Kale Khan and so on.

Ustad Rahmat Khan ( Gwalior gharana )

By convention, we do not have a 'gharana' unless its

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existence goes back to four or five generations. The other feature is that the master personality or creator of the gharana must have a high musical personality who by the sheer quality of his voice or musical tone and almost superhuman riyaz or practice based on sound talim (imparting of music) from great masters produces a distinctive style of music, voice or tonal reproduction. In musically professional families, this discipline and knowledge would be transmitted and handed down from father to son or next of kin generation after generation. This is the guru-shisya tradition which has kept up different gharana styles. Often the family line ends or thins out and the gharana tradition is carried forward by the groups of disciples who learnt the art as

Ustad Uilayet Husain ( Agra gharana—Bombay )

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outsiders and not as members or blood relations of the originator of the gharana style. Each gharana has its own distinctive and artistic discipline following certain rules and methods/techniques in musical presentation. Every gharana ( vocal or instrumental ) really originates from the nature and quality of the voice (or instrumental tone) of the founder artist. All musical idioms or techniques will not suit every voice or instrument. Classical music has undeniably a formalistic basis. Every gharana and its compositions have satisfied the test of the formalism thus giving it a scientific basis. Music lovers, all along history, have valued gharanas which not only displayed perfectness of form but also achieved some degree of refinement and complexity in the

Surasri Kesarbai Kerkar (Bombay)

technical design and style. Thus we have styles based on swar (alapi style) or tanas or laya with varying emphasis on each of them. Thus we have a large variety of gharanas developed over the last four hundred years or so starting with earlier Dhrupad Banis—Gaudiya, Dagari, Nauhari and Khandari. The gharanas relate both to vocal and instrumental music. By way of illustration one can cite many gharanas like Gwalior Gharana, Jaipur Gharana, Lucknow Gharana, Agra gharana, Indore gharana, Kirana gharana, Patiala gharana, Benaras gharana, Rampur gharana etc.

Ustad Alladia Khan
( Atrauli & Jaipur & teacher of Kesarbai Kerkar )

We have referred to the four Dhrupad Banis which are the precursors of Gharanas. Dhrupad Music had its origin in the Vedas, temple music, religious invocations, padas, and gayans—all raga based. Contrary to popular belief, the Dhrupad Banis were formalised long after the time of Haridas Swami, Tansen, Baiju, Naik Gopal and others. Though historical dates are not available, the Vanis came into vogue by the end of 17th century and developed during 18th and 19th centuries and 20th century. No musical master of earlier days claimed that he sang Dhrupads of any particular Vani. From 11th to 17th Century there was only detailed rendering of dhrupad compositions in various parts set to raga. The preface of Alap / abstract exposisition of raga roopa by the voice with the help of bols like Ri, Re, Na, Tom etc was unknown in the time of Tansen or even his 5th or 6th descendent. The earlier dhrupads had religious themes and

Pundit Bal Gandharva ( Bombay )

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only after its shifting from ashrams/temples to the Royal Court the themes turned to Nature and secular ideas. Shorter compositions came into being. It was at this stage that Dhrupad singers fell back upon the Alap techniques of the Rudra Bin, Rabab and Sursringar. The sonorous sounds of the lower octaves of the Rudra bin inspired the culture of the human voice on the lower octave right upto the lower Sa called Kharaj. Soon Vocal Alap became part of Dhrupad Music and was rendered extensively in the stages and sequences of Bin Alap. Thus we had Vilambit Alap, Madh Alap, Jod Alap, and Drut alap and gamak clearly reminiscent of the Thok Jhala and Chikari of the Rudra Bin and Sursringar.

Ustad Niamatullah Khan Sarodia. ( Lucknow )

Thus when Dhrupads were sung in different Vanis vocal

alap as such was not in vogue. The Vanis had to be distinguished from the style of singing, the ornamentations used, method of note production and total musical effaet produced by the rendering of the Dhrupad song. The Dhrupads had to be rendered in real details. Soon after the emergence of abstract Raga Alap, shorter Dhrupads came into vogue and over the centuries all the grace and technicalities Dhrupad singing started fading away. It has to be admitted that Dhrupad has today got considerably mixed up since there is no dividing line between the compositions belonging to the four Vanis. Placed as we are today, we can at best make only an attempt to identify the basic features of the four Vanis.

Ustad Sadiq Ali Khan Binkar. ( Alwar & Delhi )

The GOUR Vani was variously known as Goudiya, Gourhari, Govarhari, Gwaliori Vani. Conflicting claims exist tracing its origin to Gwalior, Guhar meaning pearl, Govarhar or Kshatriya clan or Goudiya Brahmin community

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and so on. It is however agreed that this Vani mainly rested on 'Aans' and 'Meed'. Compared to the number of stanzas, the word content was limited. Between words and stanzas the gaps were filled up by Aans or Meed. The voice had to be continuous with few breaks and pauses. The rendering was simple and straight. This Vani was ideally suited to slower compositions. The songs were replete with Shanta rasa, Gambhir rasa and Bhakti rasa. The style was so serene that even laykari in double speed ruined the music totally. Exceptional control and melody of the voice was necessary to attract listeners. This Vani has rightly been described as the Suddha Vani that is really chaste and pure.

Smt. Hirabai Badodekar. ( Poona )
( Pupil of Abdul Karim )

Swami Haridas and Tansen are hailed as maestros of this Vani. It is easy to surmise what a gifted and melodious voice Tansen must have possessed which made him a legend not only in his lifetime but for many centuries to come.

The DAGUR Vani has also several legends around its origin. One view states that Dagar means road and so this Vani is a pathfinder for dhrupad music. Another view takes Dagur as meaning "Elder" or leader of Dhrupad. The third traces its origin to a place near Delhi earlier called Dang or jungle. After Muslim invasion this place prospered and was called Danguri or Daguri. This Vani developed

Ustad Abdulla Khan
( Agra-Teacher of Ut. Faiyyaz Khan )

during the reigns of Jahangir and Shah Jehan. It was still not known as Dagur Vani. The name was openly adopted by the vocalist Rahimuddin Khan son of Allah Bande Khan of Bairam Khani gayaki.

Compared to Gour Vani, this Vani, had lyrics full of words and Dhrupads were sung in both Vilambit and Madhyalaya. With more words available dependance on Aans and Meed was reduced. The intelligent use laya in this Vani gave credence to the view that Dagur Vani was the source and origin of DHAMAR songs. There is however no historical evidence to sustain this point. As against this claim of Dagur Vani, there is a strong case that Baiju Bavra had set up an Ashram somewhere around Gwalior where Dhamars were extensively sung and taught. All these are however disputed points.

Ustad Tanras Khan ( Delhi gharana )

On one point however the Dagur Vani had a clear edge. Its compositions reflected a wider variety of "rasas" and "moods" and its field was more extensive than that of Gouriya Vani. It also used a larger variety of Talas.

Regarding KHANDAR Vani also there are several views about its origin. One view is that some Muslim musicians settled at a place called Khandahar in Rajasthan had started this style and were perhaps inspired by the Dagar Vani. Dhrupads were composed in this Vani in the time of Emporor Humayun and Akbar though this style was not called Khandar Vani. Another view is that Raja Samokhan Singh of Singalgadh in Rajasthan was a master Bin player who created this Vani and was born at Khandahar. Legend has it that his son Misri Singh was a great Bin player whom Tansen made his son-in-law at the instance of Emporor Akbar. Tansen's daughter's dynasty has given India some of the best musicians who represented a wonderful fusion of the Gouri and Khandar Vanis. These people were not repeat not Seniyas as many of their descendents and supporters have almost succeeded in establishing by clever propaganda and publicity. The author is firmly of the view that Tansen's descendents were the true Seniyas and were Dhrupad singers while Rudra Bin gharanas sprang out of Khandari Vani and a mixture of other vanis. The main feature of the Khandar Vani is rather loudly reflected in the Jod Alap of Rudra bin.

The Knandar Vani epitomises the Vira Rasa. It is full of soft and vigorous gamakas and bewildering patterns of note production. The Dhrupads in this Vani are set in Madhyalaya and Drut laya. The style is laya oriented and the singers in working out rhythmic patterns freely used the

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'bols' of the pakhawaj in the songs. There is considerable force in the view that the Merukhandi style of vistar and tanas and many tana patterns of Khayal music were handed down by the maestros of the Khandar Vani to posterity.

The origin of NAUHAR Vani is traced to a place called Nauha in Rajasthan and the early exponents are shown as Faqrullah and Hussain Khan. Technically this Vani is called a "Chut" oriented style with emphasis on Madhyalaya compositions and practically no slow Dhrupads. It conveyed the "Adbhuta" Rasa and songs are set to Talas not having a large number of beats. Over the centuries the style degenerated and fell into the hands of folk singers and travelling minstrels. Even today some singers in Rajasthan are called Nauhas. They are folk singers and have no knowledge of Dhrupads of Nauhari Vani. It is just a coincidence of names.

These Vanis, briefly described above, were definitely the precursors of the Gharanas on Khayal and Instrumental music of the last 200 to 250 years. The Vanis were styles of rendering Dhrupads as much as the Khyal Gharanas are distinct styles of Khayal singing with a definite formal basis and technical design.

We mentioned above that following Bin music the dhrupad singers adopted with great skill the abstract technique of Vocal Raga Alap. There is an important point which needs mention here. Whatever might be the legendary reputation of the Seniya dynasty of Tansen, the hard truth is that the Seniyas depended on rich voice production for slow Dhrupad songs based on 'Aansh' and 'Meed'. They were not the first or undisputed torch bearers of abstract Vocal Alap in Raga music which was decidedly the result of the combined effort of maestros of various Vanis and the undeniable contribution of the Rudra Bin and perhaps Sursringar.

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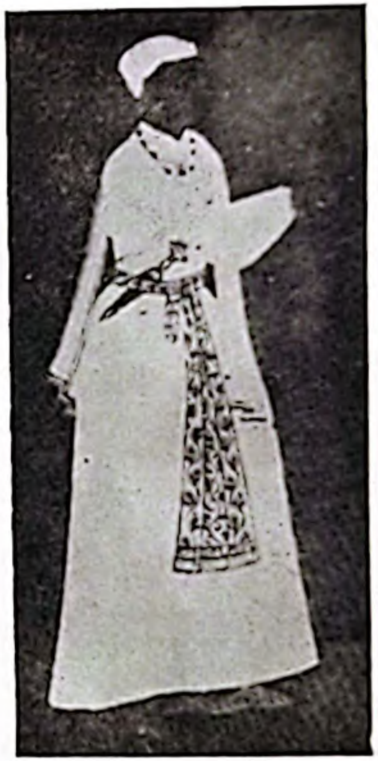
The great Indian tradition of classical music gradually blossomed into a new flower of many hues and great fragrance known as Khayal music following the basics and path laid down by Dhrupad music. The metamorphosis was gradual. Niamat Sah "Sadarang" a Dhrupad singer and Rudra Bin player of Tansen's daughter's dynasty propagated Khayal music as a composer. A Court singer in the Court of Emporor Mohmad Shah, he taught Dhrupad and Bin to his sons and kinsmen. The Khayals were taught only to outside pupils. Actually Niamat Shah had fallen out with the Emporor on a trivial issue and hid left the court.



Sangit Samrat Miya Tansen

He struggled and composed Khayals to give the Emporor a surprise some day. Some time later the Emporor chanced to listen to Khayals sung by Niamat Shah's pupils. At once Niamat Shah was sent for and reappointed as royal Musician with greater honour and status. It is quite interesting that the "Khayal" which literally means an idea was the result of a game of hide and seek between a great music composer and a Mughal Emporor. History approved of this experiment and Khayal became the embodiment of many moods, philosophies, vibrant with variety, beauty and opened new vistas of musical imagination and advancement. With over 200 years behind it, the Khayal style still holds sway amongst music lovers all over the country.

Ustad Allahbande Khan
( Dhrupadia-grandfather of Dagar brothers )

Leaving out the aspect of experimentation, the Khayal style had its unmistakeable roots in the Dhrupad. It borrowed extensively from the four Dhrupad Vanis, from instruments, folk music, dance music and has now come to occupy a central position in the musical scenerio.

The Khayal maestros, depending on their voice and temperament chose to develop mainly on two lines—the Alapi style and the Laya oriented style. The human voice has a bewildering variety of tonal qualities. Through intense practice, the voice develops a "sonorous" ring known as Jawari (common to instruments) which makes the voice pleasant to the human ear. Simultaneously different composition patterns and method of Raga Vistar were evolved by different gharanas. Some gharanas use the "akar" form of vistar, some use the words of the Khayal. Some start with the khayal in full with no "aocher" or Alap and then go on with the exposition of the Raga. Some start with the first line of the Khayal and spell out the remaining lines gradually while proceeding with the vistar. Every gharana has to settle on the sequence or stages through which the singer must pass. The bandish first, then badhat and swar vistar then layakari with the tala, then bol tanas, then the faster movements and tanas in the drut Khayal. Both the Vilambit and Drut Khayals have a method of "badhat", a distinct pattern of bol and fast tanas, distinct rhythmic movements and combinations etc. The point to be noted is that not all Khayal singers—whatever be their reputation and standing are "complete" Khayal singers. In musical parlance we do hear comments that the gayaki of artist X is "sampurna" and that of artist Y is exquisite, contemplative but "khandit" or limited hinting that many facets have been left out from the singing of

Khayal. It is not intended to bring down any artists of yesteryears or the present. Depending on voice and "talim" a Khayal singer has to build up his gayaki. No singer can ever achieve every nuance of Khayal singing. The point however is that the more complete and systematic singer can be easily identified. Another important fact is that like scholar and researchers the Gharana maestros tend to specialise in some ragas of their choice. It is not that their repertoire is incomplete but by impulse they tend to gravitate towards certain groups of ragas.

We may now analyse the basic features of some of the famous or shall we call them the parent vocal gharanas. They have drawn rather heavily from gayaki styles of various Vanis. The Instrumental gharanas have in their turn had their basic schooling in these parent gharanas and specialised on the basis of instrumental techniques and ragas of their choice. What a grand interdependance do we have in our classical musical system? The human voice or Vocal Music is certainly the fountainhead. First came the Vedas, padas, bhakti sangit, Dhrupads and then Khayals. Vocal music which guided and inspired instrumental music on melodic aspects had to draw heavily on the Rudra Bin Alap "shaili" to make Raga Alap on voice an integral part of the classical system. The other instruments also drew from Vocal music and Rudra Bin. The Surbahar and Sitar sprang from the Bin from the point of view of technique and structure. The Sursringar and the Sarod came in the footsteps of the Rabab and then there has been a continous interaction between the instrumental styles. And so we have today Alap, Jod, Jhala in all instruments following the Rudra Bin and Vocal Raga Alap pattern followed by Masitkhani (Vilambit) and Rezakhani gats (Drut) on the imagery of the slow and fast Khayals and so we now have a totality of a musical system. Alongside, the Tala System which has also brilliantly interacted with both Vocal and Instrumental styles helped to considerably heighten the total musical effect.

For study we might pick on four parent gharanas namely,

1. The Delhi Gharana. (the earliest gharana but now not so much in the limelight)
2. The Gwalior gharana, considered to be the Doyen among khayal gharanas.

Ustad Nathan Khan (Agra)

3. The Jaipur gharana and
4. The Agra gharana.

Whether we like it or not, most, if not all, of the other gharanas are either the offshoots or tributaries of these parent gharanas and are in some way or the other indebted to them for ideas, methodology and guidelines.

Every gharana has its own specialities & nuances. There are however a few basic points which every gharana gayaki must rely upon both for its eminence and acceptability. These are briefly,

1. Technique of voice production.
2. The design of compositions/bandishes.
3. Use of boltans.

Ustad Aman Ali Khan ( Bhendi Bazar )

4. Style of Raga Vistar.
5. Choice of Raga or Raga Specialisation.
6. The scheme of tanas.

The presence of these features makes for a complete or Sampurna gharana. We may now examine the sources and features of the parent gharanas.

### 1. The Delhi gharana.

This is the oldest Khayal gharana as its Master musician was none other than Niamat Shah Sadarang, the Court musician of Mohamad Shah, Emporor of Delhi. His Khayal compositions contain references to Mohamad Shah "Rangile" and he used his famous pen name of "Sadarang". The last Mughal Emporor Bahadur Shah Jafar was also a Khayal composer and his Ustad Mia Achpal or Ghulam Hussain firmly established the Delhi gharana. Later Tanras Khan, trained by Achpal, became a great Khayal singer and a legendary exponent of Delhi gharana. His son Umrao Khan took this gayaki forward and thereafter came several great well known singers like Nanhe Khan, Samman Khan and the great Sarangi player Mamman Khan. In the 20th Century, this gharana was led by Ustad Chand Khan and later Nasir Ahmed. This gharana excelled in—

—Picturesque Tanas like Jod Tod ke Tana, Jhoola ke tanas, Ukhad ke tanas, Phande etc.

—Use of very fast tanas in Drut Khayals.

—Varied structures of Khayals in styles like Palki, Sawar, Rail and uncommon rhythms.

—Tremendous control over Laya and Tala.

—Brilliant use of sargams in Khayal singing.

### 2. The Gwalior Gharana

This is easily the doyen amongst Khayal gharanas. The master figure was Ghulam Rasul of Lucknow. Then came Nathan Pirbux who migrated from Lucknow to Gwalior and his illustrious descendents Haddu Khan, Hassu Khan, Nathu Khan, Muhmad Khan, and Rahmat Khan. This gharana showed unparalleled mastery and control over the Todi group of Ragas. All the Ustads of this gharana were Court singers of Gwalior Durbar. Haddu and Hassu Khan were liberal teachers. They taught Shahdad Khan the great

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grandfather of Vilayet Khan Sitariya. More importantly this gharana produced a string of very illustious dicsiples from Maharashtra led by Balkrishna Bua Ichalkaranjikar, Vasudev Joshi and Baba Dixit. Balkrishna Bua trained the legendary Vishnu Digambar Paluskar who literally carried the flag of Gwalior gharana to Bombay, Pune, and Maharashtra. Then emerged a band of brilliant singers besides the great trio of Omkarnath Thakur, Vinayakran Patwardhan, Narayanrao Vyas apart from Paluskar's son D. V. Paluskar who died young. Nisar Hussain of this gharana trained up another group of disciples namely, Shankar Pandit, Kris narao Pandit, Ramkrishna Bua Vaze and Raja Bhaiya Poonchwale. Even Anant Manohar Joshi, Gajanan Rao Joshi and Bhimsen Joshi were moulded in their formative years by the Gwalior gharana. Yet another stalwart Inayat Hussain who was Court singer in Nepal brought up the Rampur Sahaswan gayaki with famous singers as Mushtaq Hussain, Fida Hussain and the latter's son Nisar Hussain Khan. The basic features of this gharana were :

—Very powerful throwing of the voice

—Dhrupad based Khayal

—No Alap or aochar but straight presentation of raga through Vilambit and drut Khayals.

—Straight and Sapat tanas

—Powerful Boltans

—Use of gamakas and Behalawas,

All in all it was a great gayaki, masculine, picturesque, brilliant and very melodious with an awe inspiring repertoire of compositions in many ragas.

### 3. The Jaipur gharana.

The Master figure was Mohamad Ali Khan "Manrang", followed by his descendents Muhamad Khan and Ashiqali Khan. There is a view that the Patiala gharana branched off from Jaipur gharana. Another view is that it was shaped by the Gwalior gharana. A great exponent of this gharana was Alladia Khan originally from Atrauli ( a bastion of Agra gharana ) and later of Jaipur who gave Khayal music a totally new turn and direction. In this line came Bhurji Khan, Nisarali, Kesarbai, Mallikarjun Mansur, Nivritti Bua Sarnaik and others,

Pt. Balkrishna Bua Ichalkaranjikar
[ Gwalior gharana and Ustad of Vishnu Digambar Paluskar ]

The Jaipur gharana is Dhrupad based in the vistar of its Khayals. The voice production is open but to some extent cultured. The compositions are brief. The Khayals are seldom sung in real Vilambit but mostly in Madhyalaya with fantastic use of boltans and layakari. The tanas are basically "vakra" in pattern and call for tremendous application and practice.

### 4. The Agra gharana.

Alakhdas and Mulukdas were the first precursors of this gharana but a definite shape and form was given by Haji Sujan Khan, a junior contemporary of Mia Tansen. Later Gaghe Khuda bux, Ghulam Abbas Khan and Kallan khan took the gharana forward. Khuda Bux had learnt Khayals from Nathan Pirbux of Gwalior and so both Agra and Gwalior gayakis have several features in common particularly in voice production. In the next generation came Faiyyaz Khan, Tassaduq Hussain, Nathan Khan followed by Vilayat Hussain Khan. Of them all, Faiyyaz khan was the brightest jewel in the crown of the Agra gharana. The author had the rare and good fortune, in his formative years, of recieving guidance from the Ustad then a Court musician of Baroda Durbar, and also from Ustad Abid Hussain Binkar (Jaipur gharana) of Baroda Durbar.

An Assembly of Music Maestros at Delhi in 1947.

Like Gwalior, Agra gharana has thrown up many great singers with whom the author had personal intimacy. To name but a few, Khadim Hussain, Atta Hussain, Latafat Hussain, Asad Ali (Delhi) and that bright and luminous singer Sharafat Hussain whom fate snatched away from us rather prematurely. The great maestro, teacher and singer Pt. S. N. Ratanjankar of Lucknow Maurice/Bhatkhande College fame was a pupil of Faiyyaz Khan and a product of the Agra gharana.

The basic features of this gharana may be summed up as under,

—Preface of Alap/Nom Tom in Dhrupad style followed by Dhamar

—Dhrupad based Vilambit Khayals

—Exquisite Drut Khayals with brilliant bolkari, exploiting to the full rhythmic effects

—Excellent use of bol tans

—Bold and powerful voice and tanas with heavy and clear beats often resembling the sound of cannon firing, thunder and lightning.

These in brief are the main features of the parent gharanas. There are many other illustrious gharanas and it is well nigh impossible to exhaust them in one discussion. We all have the highest respect and regard for them. Our failure to make references to many living vocal stalwarts who have kept up the traditions of these gharanas is not intended and is deeply regretted. Nor has it been possible to touch upon the Instrumental gharanas. Perhaps some authors may wish to pen articles on these subjects.

While it is not possible to touch upon the features of so many vocal and instrumental gharanas, it is possible to lay down some factors responsible for formation of gharanas—

(i) Gharanas originally family based, now are in the hands of disciples and performers outside any particular gharana stream.

(ii) Some master musician was the originator of a gharana.

(iii) The development and sophistication in music have given rise to some gharanas even outside the control of the earlier families and groups of disciples.

(iv) A gharana is a stream running through four to five generations or even more besides branching out amongst disciples.

(v) Several gharanas emerged at certain places as a result of intense culture of music by master musicians and unbounded royal patronage. Thus gharanas have been named more often after some places than after the original creators. Illustrative of this are Delhi, Agra, Gwalior, Jaipur, Benaras, Lucknow, Kirana, Rampur, Bettiah, Bhindi Bazar and so on.

(vi) Until fifty years ago, a musician belonging to an established gharana or its pupil enjoyed a higher status and standing amongst music lovers than other practitioners and there were good reasons for such recognition into which we need not go here.

(vii) In gharana development, cross fertilisation and assimilation of different cultures and musical strains have played a great part. This has enriched the gharanas and kept them free to absorb new ideas and forms.

Let us now attempt an assessment of the present relevance and influence of so many gharanas or traditions (vocal and instrumental)—the richest heritage handed over to us by history. Before the advent of the British, the culture of classical music was largely confined to royal courts of Moguls, Nawabs, Rajas and Zaminders apart from Ashrams and Temple campuses. After the British left and coming of independence, a sea change has taken place. Though new possibilities have opened up, the type of patronage and environment (Mahol) in which our musical culture flourished had come to an end. Many many living scions of rich gharanas had to fight for their livelihood. Determined not to compromise their art and position, many of them just perished unseen and unheard for there was no court of appeal or redress. Several representatives of Agra gharana, Delhi gharana, Jaipur gharana, Rampur gharana, Indore gharana spent years in great poverty and want after Independence. A few only were provided for by All India Radio. Many of their dependants had to abandon music and take to other means of livelihood. Kathak dancer families took to singing Thumris and Sarangi players tried teaching vocal music. The simple reason was that they and their art were not capable of compromise and the new listening public, vastly increased in number, was just unable to relish their music and looked for exciting and entertaining music. The change started in mid fifties and by the eighties the very fabric of classical music, its practice and presentation changed phenomenally. We have had musicians and some amongst them having the foresight (though not that amount of knowledge or musical excellence) developed the necessary strategy to carve out a niche and future for themselves.

The scenario had changed altogether. The Ustad-shisya parampara was dying out, courts of patronage had gone, the traditionally enlightened music listeners and lovers (nurtured by courts) were too gone. What followed next is too well-known. There was a mushrooming of schools and institutions imparting music to students through a large number of teachers. Music tended to become commercialised. Artists were driven to perform before varied audiences often uninitiated in music and insisting upon "pleasing" or "exciting" performances in a very limited time span because, for the new listeners life had many callings and time for listening to classical music was rather limited. Numerous "artists", not even properly trained, emerged alongside various commercialised groups of organisers of music conferences and concerts. All in all, it was fine time for a limited number of clever performers having a reasonably good musical background and more so for a large number of new and up coming artists who had successfully assessed the "listeners" requirements and tailored their music within the framework of changed 'tastes' and commercial considerations. Independence further opened the flood gates of the West and 'propagation of culture' because a major preoccupation of various organisations and artists. The Khandani Ustad and his music became total misfits in this new environment and ethos. Music had to be taught in Universities and institutions by teachers of varying backgrounds who were no match for the earlier musicians either in skill or knowledge. Earning a livelihood through music in such 'open' and competitive conditions became a commercial proposition.

The most interesting but perhaps inevitable development in the changed context, has been the movement launched by several performers, organisers and listeners alike to work out and introduce 'innovations' in our classical musical system so that it adapts itself to 'present day' requirements. And so we have new styles, compromises, mutilations, new creations and all manner of new things brought in. Indian music has been historically changing over the centuries—a slow process where innovations did take place but within the mainstream of musical culture. Innovations came in phases. Firstly, rythm and tala became far too prominent and engrossing. Secondly, western influence over orchestration and jazz music encouraged compromises in instrumental music in respect of both raga content and taking of liberties in different ways. Thirdly, there was a craze for speed and tayari in music. This new licence was far too pronounced in the North whereas the South seriously held on to its traditions and tried to protect, as much as possible, the pristine purity of its music. I am quoting here from the writings of the well-known musicologist and musician Prof. Waman Rao Deshpande in his book entitled "Indian Musical Traditions".

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Ustad Wahid Khan ( Kirana )

"Nobody ever questioned Ghulam Ali's great prowess in classical music, but he fell a prey to indisciplined singing because he wanted to please his audience. He thought that he had to please them because they were supposed to have specific expectation from him. These audience are mainly composed of listeners who habitually crowd auditoriums of musical festivals these days and whose appreciation of music is at best superficial. The whole question is who created these audience's expections ? The answer is Ghulam Ali himself.

It is he who revelled in titillating their peculiar appetite and earning their cheap applause. How one wishes Ghulam Ali had preserved intact his artistic integrity and thereby trained his listeners in a higher taste !

• • •

In this context of spectacularism there are many, who have committed the same sin. In fact many vocalists and instru mentalists have fallen a prey to temptation. Great artists like Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar, Vilayet Khan—all shared the fault. Others follow their example. Still Ghulam Ali must be put on the top of the list because he was the seniormost and most respected representative of his day. The question that has now arisen is how do we entertain crowds without lowering the higher standard of Indian music ? It is difficult to say what the shape of things will be or how the artists will meet the situations. This question persistently nags the minds of those who care for preservation of our musical standards."

The musically educated listeners and patrons and the restraint of the musicians kept things under some form of check as no one was prepared to throw our rich musical heritage overboard. And then there always were "rules of the game" and any musician taking undue and unwarranted liberties was sure to be found out and, on occasions, openly cautioned and reprimanded by both seniors and even listeners. Where are these checks now ? Many senior have rudely asked—was all this change and dramatisation necessary ? A genuine coin, in cultural phraseology, was never required to pass off as Counterfeit. Why did knowledgeable musicians indulge in this risky adventure ?

So innovations were introduced by the celebrities themselves. It is quite a mystery why they did all these. On the other hand, the heavens would not have fallen if they had tried to go a little slow and to remain in the mainstream of our traditional music. No doubt classical music, as a performing art, has been greatly enriched and a new direction has been given. The celebrities were themselves safe since they had their firm grounding and training in classical music and were highly gifted artists, who could take some risks but the basic question is what about their followers and enthusiasts ? With the "models" in front of them, they took to this new style which deflected a very large number of performers from the classical path. By a queer irony of fate, the true classicists now started to be called "old-timers" as against the modern and progressive artists who were sprouting all over. We have had no periodical evaluation of our musical culture from time to time as in the west and so the extent of deflection and devaluation in our classical music is difficult to assess with any degree of accuracy.

Ut. Hafiz Ali Khan Sarodia ( Gwalior )

In the former days senior artists and even listeners used to stand up and reprimand any erring artists. I have seen this happen in concerts in Bombay, Pune and Baroda. One reprimand had a rippling effect on the performers in general for quite some time. Personalities like Faiyaz Khan, Vilayet Husain Khan, Pandit Ratnajankar, Allauddin Khan, Ahmad Jan Thirakua, Hafez Ali never hesitated to frown whenever occasion demanded and their very presence acted as a check on the more adventurous performers. But to-day we have just compromise all the way. Even the seniors will just not speak out. Perhaps no one wants to be unpleasant and when compromise has become almost a way of life, how can we expect music alone to remain an island of chastity and discipline?

The above is only by way of background to come to grips with the real situation. There are strong opposing points of views also. One clearly is—must our classical music and cultural heritage remain confined to select groups of performers and listeners? Should not the gates be thrown open to all listeners and aspiring musicians in the present democratic set-up? Culture must be clearly above castes and groups. We suppose the type of conflict and contradiction we are facing to-day are bound to arise when the environment and ethos are themselves changing in the field of music. We have a rush of newcomers. The culture of classical music ( though greatly commercialised ) has phenomenally expanded. Despite some degree of lowering of standards and deflection from strict discipline, it must be conceded that extremely talented musicians have emerged in recent decades displaying depth, refinement, and virtuosity of a level which is reminiscent of the old maestros. Is this not proof of the innate vitality and pulsating strength of our classical tradition and heritage? Entertainment apart, many basic questions (emerging from intelligent, uninhibited and inquisitive young minds) are being raised and simple

answers to them cannot be given. Is this not the emergence of a brave new world in classical music? Is this not a challenge and at the same time the sign of a great struggle to fuse the past with the present and create a new synthesis? Music can no longer be "caged" by conservatives, diehards and fundamentalists. It is only the intelligent, gifted. imaginative, properly trained and hardworking persons who can today deliver the goods and satisfy the urges of the music lovers. They must be sound and honest and not upstarts backed up by publicity alone.

The situation, however, is still fluid, old values are clearly in the melting pot and new values are slow to develop and thereafter gain allround acceptance. How is classical music to survive, keep up its traditions and imbibe new developments to fit into the changed age of listening and popular urges? This is the million dollar question today.

We have to think of some sort of reconciliation. The present and past must intermingle and give birth to a future world of classical music which combines both the earlier traditions and the innovations suited to present day conditions. It is in this direction that we must move. How do we go about this difficult job? Let us find some illustrative and possible answers which may not be sufficient or detailed enough.

(1) Traditional or gharanadar musicians should be given some type of continuing financial support by Govt. or lay public and private organisations.

(2) All India Radio should absorb them as staff artists and advisers as far as possible.

(3) Chairs should be created in Universities on regional and rotational basis to provide for eminent musicians.

(4) Private organisations set up to further the cause of music should be supported and their performance regularly watched.

(5) There should be a fair system of assessment and rating by elder musicians and musicologists for deciding upon assistance on all the four points above.

(6) All India Radio should screen and grade artists with fairness, impartiality and strictness.

(7) All foreign tours under Govt. and public control as part of cultural exchange programme should be manned by graded musicians and not by ill trained persons who manage to go abroad through contacts or influence. After all, foreign countries must hear correct and authentic music of India and not an admixture or different sorts of music. The supreme test for the powers that be is whether they will be fair, strict and impartial in their judgment and selection. The gradation lists of AIR/Doordarsan can be the starting point. The point raised here is a matter which must seriously concern bodies like the Sangit Natak Academi, the Indian Council of Cultural Relation, the Ministry of Culture and even the Universities besides State Governments and cultural organisations.

(8) Proper courses of music appreciation and concert-demostrations with powerful press coverage educating listeners on a wide scale on the basis of elementary concepts, technique and phrases of music. This is the only way to keep erring and adventurist performers of music under check and in their proper place. The control and check of Maharajas, Nawab and elder listeners are now gone. Unfettered license will finish whatever is left of our classical music and traditions.

(9) There must also be fair system of spotting new talents and giving all support for their training and performance. This again is a matter of fairness and impartiality in selection.

(10) Commercial cassettes and recordings of the recitals of old masters, as may be available in the National Archives and records of Gramophone companies, should be produced on a large scale and sold at subsidised prices. Listening sessions of these recordings with explanatory interludes should be organised in all parts of the country. This is part of musical education for all of us particularly the youngsters who love music and wish to specialise and make a living out of it. Let us not be accused of holding back our glorious musical heritage from the present and future generations. However tenous, this link must be strengthened and maintained since the guru-shisya parampara is on the decline today.

There may be many other good suggestions. Only an illustrative list has been given above. The roots of a nation are in its classics. We must be quite firm on the point that we cannot allow our classics to be ruined. We may modify our approach, change our strategy, vary our emphasis but let there not be a sell out of classical music in the name of cheap popularity and commercialisation. Gharanas may have become out of date today for various reasons but musical discsipline can and must be restored, and it is in this direction that we must move.

## CHAPTER-4

## THE CONSUMERS OF CLASSICAL MUSIC

No system of classical music has entirely lived or developed on the efforts of the artists and performers alone or on the strength of tradition and patronage. The fulfilment of all art lies in the healthy interaction and exchange between the artist and the listeners and music necessarily is a two way process, a process of stimulus and response. Down the ages, the listeners have enjoyed, evaluated, inspired and often revolted against artists and performers thereby charting out fresh lines of artistic development and innovation. From temples and ashrams our classical music shifted to Royal Courts and Durbars and then to chamber concerts and finally to halls, auditoriums and even open pandals. The purpose of this chapter is just to highlight how consumer reaction in a free country, with royal courts and nawabs gone, has been powerfully influencing the performance and presentation of classical music. A sort of bird's-eye view on the changing scenerio for the last forty years, keeping in view the classical approach, has been presented here. No offence is intended to anyone, big or small, since the effort here has been just to portray the realities in so far as presentation of classical music is concerned vis-a-vis the listeners or consumers of music.

In Tansen's time, classical music moved out from temples and ashrams to the royal courts. In the last half a century, it has moved further on to the concert stage. Musicians, as sublime performers, are now a thing of the past. Musicians have now admitted again and again that it is the common man who really "calls the tune". The "patrons" are quite a "complex mixture" of men and groups. The musicians know now that they are hardly engaged in any spiritual, sacred or ennobling activity. They have to bestow a great deal of attention upon the nature and movements of the listening public. Today the "consumers" or the audience includes a smaller number of connoisseurs and a much larger number of listeners who, to put it blunlty, are musically unsophisticated. This is in sharp contrast to the earlier audiences where there were basically connoisseurs made up of the knowledgeable, highly educated and refined nobility. Now and then, however, there are still a few small chamber concerts where entry is restricted to the really knowledgeable listeners and where the musicians ( now used to playing more entertaining music with demonstration of virtuosity ) are required to etch out refined music that is basically classical and "parampara" or "talim" based. We know that many musicians, brought up in the changed culture of music, are not quite at home in such concerts. But there are some others who are literally itching for an opportunity to perform in such concerts over and over again, and these are the traditional or gharandur musicians who can rise up to levels of performance expected by the connoisseurs. When we talk of "consumers" of music, we should attempt to identify them all down the line since classical music is tending to become big business within the country and perhaps more so abroad on grounds or cultural exchange and propagation of art. Who are today's consumer's of music ? For whom are so many concerts, recitals, festivals and private functions being arranged ? What is their make up, their needs and their urges ?

The phrase "consumption of music" by different interests has a very wide connotation because we do not mean only the listening public but to a very large number of groups who either directly or indirectly utilise music. Their role largely lies in manipulating, controlling, directing and sometimes also patronising music. Our legendary musicians of the past centuries could not have dreamt of such a musical ethos and may have found it almost impossible to survive in such a bewildering situation along with their traditional music.

The serious listeners of music are no doubt important but somehow or other they are being relegated to the background. Their numbers are not only dwindling but there is less and less concern now for their maturity of understanding and their responses and reactions to present day styles of musical presentation. The true classicist is admittedly having rather a difficult time in such conditions.

In the present situation, one must concede that the greatest single consumer of music and perhaps socially and financially the most relavant is the "advertiser". Were it not for advertising, many public musical functions would not have been financially possible. Advertisement has not only merely made unpaid admissions into music concerts possible but also made possible the engagement at very high fees of professional musicians. In the business world, this is today not considered as a mere advertisement but a useful strategy in promoting good public relations. Along with promotion of music goes promotion of commercial products also Many commercial organisations have been found to go a step forward by generously donating to various "Relief Funds" and "Trusts" in fulfilment of what might be described as their social responsibilities. Along with music, cultural programme has become a necessary appendage. Many music recitals by many artists in cities like Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay and Madras are sponsored by organisations who have nothing to do with music. They are basically interested in celebrating themselves through cultural events. Apart from regular concerts and conferences, there is a plethora of functions like celebration of anniversaries of musicians, awarding of titles, purses etc.

Another very important consumer of music is undoubtedly the Government. Apart from owning a very large network of Radio Stations and Television Stations, music is now looked upon as a strong force of cultural integration in the country. The Government establishment in promoting music supports very large number of people in various Ministries, Directorates and State Governments. Classical musicians, having the necessary contacts, also find place in goodwill missions where they present themselves as cultural Ambassadors of the country.

The owners of gramophone records and cassettes or those owning record/cassette libraries are amongst the serious consumers of music. Often they organise serious listening sessions and try to bring back to life the music of the musical giants of the past. They also set the stage for drawing comparisons of styles and art forms, highlighting the special qualities of artists or gharana styles. One wishes that the tribe of such serious minded persons increases. They and their records can form the best possible and the most dependable link between the music of the early part of the current Century and the present.

We have referred, earlier, to the significant and economically decisive role played by the "advertisers" group as consumers of music. Behind them, but of greater vintage, come the established organisers of 'Music Conferences' whether as single individuals or groups of individuals or as Associations or Institutions. They hold conferences every year almost as annual rituals, to which they invite musical celebrities and performers both senior, junior and the up and coming artists. There are no yardsticks of selection as such but some conventions only. A celebrity or two is a must mainly as box office draw. Then there is a balancing of vocalists, instrumentalists, and often a dance item. There is also a group of accompanists of various types. The organisers of conferences generally have an attractive name for their conference and their finances depend upon donations, souvenir-advertisements and finally sale of tickets. The anatomy and the goings on in these Conferences would make a fascinating study. As consumers of music, it is sufficient to note here that they have now become a commercial proposition. Both individuals and institutions in this group make a living out of these conferences. The patronage of music, or encouragement of talent or promotion of serious music and its listening are only incidental irrespective of whatever may be generally professed In this field also there are big organisers, small organisers and some of the "Music Circles". Like the music schools there has lately been a mushrooming of these music circles with organisers who, in the present competive conditions, are trying to find out and establish an identity of their own. It is good to be an impressario, or a promoter, or organiser, or even an offiice bearer in some institution or circle according to one's ability, connections or pull. As things are now developing, one's "musical presence" must be made known ( whether as performer or organiser ) to be able to forge ahead in fresh fields and pastures new of the great world of music. That is perhaps why in every leading city, even professional performers of music have their own small circle or institution. Between these institutions there is "an exchange" of artists who perform on reciprocal basis. This is how music is exchanged and performers get exposed to new environments. It is a regular quid pro quo business. An artist today thus needs a sponsor or promoter to be able to come into circulation in the field of music. Present day economic conditions have thrown young men and women artists early in-to the world and they have to learn to swim with the times or get pushed to the sidelines and wait patiently for another break or lucky turn of events. A musician of today has necessarily to be a combination of talent, training, contacts, opportumity, courage and finally luck.

The foreign returned artist appears to enjoy a special status symbol ; at least he is considered to have had the benefit of foreign exposure and has been able to treat foreigners, belonging to a totally different cultural ethos, to the refinements of Indian Raga music. It is debateable how and why such exposure should be accepted as a basis for extra recognition. He can of course be credited with having gained more experience in the field of musical performance before varied audiences.

Today's musicians do not succeed or survive on the basis of merit and performance alone. Much more important factor is the extent of contacts and the circle of acquaintance which the musicians are able to cultivate. This can be extrapolated as the dignified but camoflauged art of "managing" organisers and securing bookings at different concerts and programmes. Sometimes Newspaper music critics are also very affectionately cultivated not so much for their love of music or depth of understanding, but for the publicity coverage they can give to musicians of their choice or liking.

Music education as a source of patronage falls into three catagories. First is the traditional teacher disciple system, the second are tutions i.e. a teacher teaching one or more students on acceptance of monthly remuneration. And the third are the music schools in which a musician serves either as a teacher or as accompanist. With the extension in the system of tutions and larger coverage by music schools, music as a profession is gaining more and more respectibility and music as a professional career is being recognised. Educational institutions teaching music are of many types. We have music departments in universities, music departments in different degree colleges and a large mushroom group of neighbourhood music schools. To what extent the music schools have really produced good performing musicians is a very big question. But many critics appear to have agreed on the benefits which these schools confer viz. that they support musicians and help to create an informed listening public.

The performing artists have today to take note of a really mixed lot of listeners. It would be too simplistic to classify listeners into "sophisticated" and "unsophiticated" groups. There are listeners, though limited, who are concerned with musical performance and the content thereof. There is another kind of listeners who are concerned with the totality of performance meaning thereby that they watch not only all that goes on on the stage but almost everything happening in the concert hall. Quite often such listeners are either the camp followers of some other musicians or are themselves performing musicians and attend the concerts more by way of evaluating the music and carefully watching the responses of the audiences. Now these listeners move around in clusters at the extremity of the concert hall and sometimes also float around near the stage, merely because they want to be seen attending such concerts. Then there are listeners who come to the concert to listen to one particular artist and quietly vanish when the next artist starts performing. Yet another group of listeners can be called the music "fan" who form a separate catagory altogether. They are for obvious and sometimes inexplicable reasons, attached to the music celebrities and the better known performers.

The main conclusion which emerges from all this is that with such "consumers" around, there are far reaching implications for classical music, its future and for the performing musicians themselves. As in other fields, so also in the field of classical music nothing succeeds like success. Apart from talent, "talim" and application, a musician now has to have very clear perceptions regarding his image

(including dress and personality), audience reactions, qualities of flexibility and adaptability and the capacity of anticipating the needs of the listeners and organisers. The "press friends" have always to be kept in good humour and on the right side. Is it for nothing that some musical celebrities are seen to entertain the media at get together parties, and the like? Who except the media men, by repeated and slanted reporting, will help to create on image, reputation and wider acceptability for a chosen band of artists? Let us not be mistaken however. The press, by its impulse tends to be free and assertive. Now and then some performers do get a bruise or two. The powers that be also hit back and pressures are exerted to bring round the "erring" or too "irresponsible" music critics to their senses! The fight is on and this is a good sign for the future of music.

So it is competition all the way and a veritable rat race amongst performers and organisers. It is only the more clever and suave "operators" with a greater finesse who will have an edge over others. It is said that even when other things are equal, some men are more equal than others.

Let us now turn to another large and rather powerful group of institutional consumers of music. We should like to include in this group (a) the Institutions, Academies of Music or by whatever name they may be called, (b) the Press and journals, and finally (c) the Gramophone Companies and cassette recording agencies.

Institutions come in a class by themselves. Some of them are outright private groups, sometimes as registered societies, some as trusts, sometimes as outfit or cultural arm of large corporate organisations, but all of them tend to have common professed objectives like teaching of music, holding of seminar discussions or workshops, propagation of music through holding of concerts at fixed points or even on peripatetic basis, sometimes awarding of diplomas, certificates or titles, conducting examinations in a State or all over the country and so on and so forth. This is not the place for an in depth study of these institutions or their style of working or the net impact of their activities on classical music and its future. What, however, will merit mention is that these institutions by gathering momentum and building up contacts with various interests in the corporate sector and the government, have developed into pressure groups and centres of musical patronage. Necessarily in this world of give and take, an invisible but quite well understood code of ethics regarding concert presentation and projection of music has involuntarily developed. In a situation where musicians are yearning for fame, recognition and above all for monetary earnings, they have been rather quick to come to terms, shall we say to an understanding, with these institutions. Thus it is that these institutions have started to influence, in a subtle manner, through their propagation programme, the style and ethics of musical presentation and indirectly also the manner in which music should be appreciated. It is this very powerful group which, backed by money power and social influence, really manipulates, controls, directs and patronises music. Perhaps the only powerful and balancing force is the Broadcasting and Television medium which are still publicly owned and controlled by the Government and Parliament. Music in the private sector carries high rewards. Now and then appetising music or music attempting to stray out of the authentic classical mainstream is sometimes being promoted and patronised. After all there is freedom of enterprise and no one can be faulted for taking a line of his choice. How, else can one explain well known celebrities moving on with the times and settling for presenting Bhajans or Folk songs, of course at fabulously high fees and in equally fabulous surroundings? One sadly remembers the earlier stalwarts who would not budge from their professed musical forms and idioms whatever be the consequences. Did we not have a giant for example in the late Ustad Amir Khan who to his dying day never felt the need or temptation to sing even a Thumri let alone folk songs? Times have since changed very much.

The next group concerns the Press and journals. Journals devoted entirely to discussion of classical music are becoming rare just because critical understanding of music and its presentation is no longer in demand. In the newspapers, we do find now and then some articles dealing with musicians, or musical forms, but they are few and far between. The main thrust of the newspapers is mainly on publishing reviews of programmes in the concerts and conferences in the bigger cities. Music critics also may not be construed as a "class apart". They are very much a cross section of music lovers, students of music, and the listeners of music. Programme coverage has been increasing fast which necessarily means that the quality of review cannot always be maintained at a really high level. The artists, on an average, get hardly a line or two or perhaps a small paragraph, and often the play of words can be such that the precise inferences are difficult to understand. Music critics are also subject to lot of pressures. Impartial and critical reviews have landed up some of the music critics into real trouble. One still must hope and believe that, given the music critics of the requisite background and quality, they can fulfill an extremely constructive role in promoting correct appreciation and understanding of classical music and also guide, to some extent, the performing artists in improving and remoulding their style and approach in the presentation of music. The press and the music critics are certainly not direct consumers of music but their projection and assessment of musical performances can sharpen and improve the understanding of the general group of listeners. This calls for a high degree of fairness, tolerance and patience. The music critics have to interact with different styles of music and for proper and fair assessment they need the highest degree of neutrality, impartiality and understanding of both the musicians' and listeners' points of view.

Finally a word about the producers of records and cassettes. They provide music for home consumption right at the doorsteps of the listeners. In the process, they edit and consume lot of music. Record/cassette business is a large field today. One can only hope that more than the Corporate sector who often celebrate themselves through music, the Gramophone and Cassettee companies should accept some degree of "social responsibility" and bring out records of classical music of artists of real standing ( not always celebrities ) by ignoring the usual commercial considerations. They have a large business turnover and their sales of records of film music and lighter forms are very high indeed which could more than compensate for any shortfalls in earnings which might arise from sales of classical records. The listening of classical music has expanded enormously and any move on the part of record companies to promote classical music will be socially rewarding and beneficial.

In all the current mounting competition and tussles all round involving artists, organisers, the consumers of music and the disinterested listeners, there is, undoubtedly, a silver lining somewhere. Many barriers have been pulled down, many prejudices and reservations have been swept away. The practice of music, the presentation of music and the listening of music have increased beyond all expectations. Out of this is emerging a subtle and deeper understanding of our classical music amongst the general listeners. All that is perhaps needed is something in the way of correct musical appreciation and exposure to the best examples of

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presentation by existing classical masters and understanding of the fundamentals of melody, note application, raga picture and rhythm. One passionately hopes that the enlightened listeners will help to support the real classics, the music having tradition behind it and eschew the music which draws its strength from only virtuosity, showmanship and publicity support. Even the die hards and traditionalists believe that this free-for-all situation in classicial music will not last indefinitely and discerning elements amongst the listeners will rise up and speak for the real classical forms and shout down adulteration and adventurism in classical music. After all the human spirit has an eternal yearning for the sublime and divine and at some point of time it will stand up boldly in support of classical traditions.

# CHAPTER 5
# THE APPRECIATION OF CLASSICAL MUSIC

The entire environment in which classical music used to be practised, cultivated, heard and appreciated down the centuries, has changed rather too rapidly during the last fifty years or so. Historically, the practice and presentation of this music shifted first from the temples and ashrams to the royal courts and chamber concerts and finally and almost inevitably to the Concert stage. This apart, music is being widely presented through various forums and media such as the radio, television, records and the rapidly expanding media of cassettes. The changes have come on far too quickly while cultivation and presentation of music have expanded almost the beyond comprehension. What, in this changed situation, is the state of appreciation or understanding of classical music ? Classical Music, unfortunately, is an art where not only the performer has to learn it from scratch but the listener too has to have some general understanding of this music, the raga and tala system, nature of musical compositions and in particular the sequence or the stages in which this music is presented. In other words, the understanding or appreciation of classical music is just not the same thing as enjoying a film song, ghazal or a bhajan. Good music is pleasant and sweet to hear but a little more knowledge is necessary to be a good and useful listener of classical music.

Who are the listeners of classical as presented in the concerts, radio, television and records and casettes ? It is a motley and mixed lot and no segregation group-wise is possible. Still, however, an attempt should be made identify at least the different types of listeners, their urges and reactions as far as the music presented is concerned. One group surely would be the listeners who are musically highly cultured such as maestros, performing musicians, the teachers, students, disciples, research scholars etc. This group would not be numerically sizeable. In fact it cannot be so. The second group is made up of the amateur listeners, people who love to listen to music though they have not, for no fault of theirs, had training in classical music. In this come very many people who are keenly interested in other musical forms like light music, folk music, religious music which have some relationship with classical music however distant. Then there is the third and possibly largest group of listeners who have just a nodding acquaintance with music of all types and could with a little patience sit through a session of Dhrupad music right upto a Jazz session. Let us be clear on one point. It is these large groups of listeners who control box office collections and mould general public opinion and reaction towards classical music. We live in a democracy and every art form, whether we like it or not, is severely conditioned and controlled by such opinion. This is really where music in pre Independent India and now radically differs from one another. This also explains why classical music has been pressurised into taking hybrid forms and becoming almost unseemly innovative to cater to the pleasure and enjoyment of such large groups of listeners. What will a musician do except to compromise his music in the interest of his livelihood ?

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This new ethos has encouraged talents of various types which do not always or properly come within the classical tradition. The organisers of concerts have necessarily to take note of these relatively modern / performing talents and the entertainment that can, in the easiest manner, be given to a vast crowd of listeners. It is this situation which once again puts a very high premium on the role which publicity and the media can play in projecting both the music presented and the performing musicians. And so whoever can entertain or excite the best tends to rise in fame and glamour. Repeated performances backed up by pressure publicity and press coverage tend to build up musical celebrities out of comparatively ordinary or just more than average calibre artists. Thus fame and talent do not always match.

Whoever, therefore, wishes to build up better appreciation of classical music has an uphill task before him and perhaps the detractors will be many. Not many will want real classical music based on sound talim and tradition to surface prominently. Music now is big business and a wide variety of considerations go into its presentation and promotion. Surely general public acceptability is one of the strongest considerations. The battle is quite unequal because in this scuffle entertaining music, which can be enjoyed without much understanding ( the lighter forms ) will in all probability eclipse or side tract what has come down to us as classical music from the past as our tradition and heritage.

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We have referred to different groups of listeners from whom appreciation of music has to come. The really important and perhaps the most critical group consists of the youths of the country. This is a group which is plastic and can be influenced and conditioned. The young boys and girls have an impressionable mind and their understanding and perceptions are quick and often correct. Properly approached, they are intelligent and have intuitive powers to differentiate. The youths of today are the citizens of tomorrow. If their interest can be awakened in our classical music, at least in its basics, its background, its rules etc, our efforts would have been more than rewarded. Personally I have a conviction that our youths do have a deep and ingrained faith

in our cultural heritage and the fine arts which include classical music also. The task would be to create in them the correct attitudes and perceptions regarding our classical musical system. After all, who does not like melodius notes and the beats of rhythm ?

While the more crucial and effective strategy to create an interest amongst the youths of the country in classical music may be considered separately, we may analyse the really commendable steps that are being taken by the not very old voluntary organisation known as SPICMACAY. The abbreviation as is commonly known stands for "Society for promotion of classical music and culture amongst the youths". This has been concieved as an All India organisation with regional set up for various regions comprising the states of the country. It is still a loosely knit organisation and inspite of the best efforts the coverage in several regions is somewhat sporadic and leaves much to be desired. The movement is spearheaded by academicians having a deep interest in classical music and the organisers/workers at the field level are made up of student volunteers. This is really as it should be. The strategy is that the student and youth community should be exposed to good and authentic classical music sessions through concerts and lecture demonstrations.

What however has been really happening is that concerts are held in the metropolitan and larger cities in which the participants are, practicaly without exception, the musical celebrities or the more fortunate concertised artists. To the best of our knowledge. there is nothing by way of simple lectures explaining the system of our classical music followed by music which is both illustrative and authentic. Let us concede that the celebrities are difficult to get for this type of work and if they do come they have often no time to talk and explain or sometimes do not have the required capacity to communicate with the student/youth community. The organisers, on the other hand are convinced that without the presence and performance by the celebrities crowds cannot be expected or attracted. One has to note with regret that if this is the final thinking on the subject, the objectives of SPICMACAY will largely remain unfulfilled.

The mere parading of celebrities in concert functions will not awaken youth interest in classical music. Real interest can be more effectively created by more communicative performance by real artists of merit and standing who are not the commonly acknowledged celebrities. An important step would be to organise small workshops where apart from talking and demonstration there can be active participation by the youths including question/answer sessions and free exchange of ideas. Qualitatively SPICMACAY programmes have to be different from tame and straight concert performances by musical celebrities. The author is not aware whether in the concerts any role is assigned to competent comperes who can briefly explain to the youths the aims of the concert, what the artist is going to perform, to which tradition the artist belongs and the features of the form and compositions which are proposed to be presented. We are afraid that the task is really difficult and ardous and a much more carefully thought out strategy will be necessary to match the objectives that the SPICMACAY has in view. What has been said above is based on the author's wide experience with the projection and presentation of classical music before student audience of different background and understanding in various parts of the country. One word more. The functions should be carefully planned and organised so that the attendance at the concerts is reasonably good and pitifully low attendance which characterise some of the functions might be avoided.

There is one more point to be kept in mind. In the concerts organised by SPICMACAY we usually have a cross section of bright students coming from different academic disciplines. Leaving aside their knowledge or background in classical music, they have a sharp intellect and a keen sense of perception. This is all the greater reason why the programmes should be appropriately designed and suited to the needs and capacity of the participants. We shall be doing precious little if we rest content with the stereotyped nature of programmes. We are not aware if there is any feed back of the reactions following the programmes. Some of the widely reported and a bit lenghthy press reviews should not lull us into a sense of complacency. The objective namely awakening of an abiding interest in classical music as also reaching the target group namely bright young men and women having several other interests are both difficult to achieve and get accross to. A clear strategy, well planned programmes and regular follow up and feed back of information are necessary. It is a moot question whether all this is being or has been done.

The SPICMACAY deserves the highest praise for having initiated an important movement and created the initial impact. It is only to see the movement grow further and grow into a living force in our musical scenario that the anlysis and sugestions above been made. Obviously it will take time for the movement to gather momentum. If, however, our bearings and perspectives are not correct, the desired results might not be achieved and so much of selfless, voluntary and hard work may not win the reward that is legitimately due.

To awaken love and interest in classical music, we have to think of other strategies also. The most crucial is perhaps that of exposing the school going children to the basics and rudimentary concepts and practices of our classical musical system. In childhood, the human material is the most

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plastic and the mind highly impressionable. In our discussion on Appreciation of Classical Music, it is this aspect to which we may now briefly turn.

The strategy should be to introduce some instructions in the school stage itself regarding music—the system and its rules. The students need not learn classical music as such. They should only be exposed to what classical music really is, how it is cultivated and how it is presented and how it can have diverse applications in other art forms like drama, dance, orchestration etc. In other words, instructional courses. which are not at all burdensome, have to be introduced from the school stage. Apart from instructions, there should be simple lecture-demonstrations to educate the boys and girls in classical forms, the grammar, the rules, principles of rythm etc. Lecture demonstrations should be followed by free open house discussions. Such free interaction will definitely arouse interest amongst them. Some of them will feel induced to pursue music further to satisfy their curiosity. We should not expect music performers to be produced out of this, but certainly we can look forward to a fairly representative group of young boys and girls who, at least, understand the basics or the essence of our musical system and can distinguish between the music belonging to the classical mainstream and music which is either off beat, or outlandish or purely adventurist. If this minimum understanding or sense of appreciation is created, we shall have immensely brightened the prospects and future of classical music.

This first step is to integrate such instructional courses into our school education through the active support of the School Boards and the State Governments. If history, literature, mathematics can be compulsorily taught why not some short elementary courses on classical musical system be also introduced ? These courses would in proper time, also develop attitudes and aptitudes which will help both the cultivation and propagation of classical music. These instructional courses need not always be taught live but with the help of cassettes and video cassette recordings. It should be possible to produce such cassette / instructional courses supported by musical cassette pieces to illustrate the lessons.

At the University level, there would be scope to continue such instructions on optional basis and of course those having musical inclinations can easily opt for regular courses leading to degree/diploma in music.

The next target group are the people who have got out of the university and have settled down in life following occupations of their choice. Many of them do love music, buy records, go to concerts but their understanding is somewhat hazy just because they did not have the opportunity of being exposed to any form of training or instructions in our musical system. This group would need necessarily a different approach.

The approach hopefully could be through a judicious use of the media. Some possible steps to awaken interest in classical music for this group of men and women may be

(i) The use of All India Radio to put accross short classical pieces, both vocal and instrumental ( specially recorded by artists of standing ) through programmes like Sangit Sarita, Sangit Parichaya, Subadha Sangit. These programmes should be beamed during peak and prime listening hours such as mornings, late evenings and nights.

(ii) Radio can be used for short interviews and interesting illustrative demonstrations by good artists.

(iii) Sale, at subsidised prices, of specially made short commercial cassettes of artists of standing in which the artists speak briefly about their tradition, and present familiar ragas through compositions.

(iv) The natural love for musical forms like Bhajans and geets should be exploited by setting their tunes on well known classical ragas with as little admitures as possible. Historically, raga music has derived great sustenance from Bhajans and devotional songs. There may be no objection while announcing any such programme or items either on the radio or at a concert to say that the piece to be presented is based on such ragas. Maximum use of this method can be made during radio listening hours particularly the mornings when the listeners are fresh and in a receptive mood.

(v) The greatest thrust can however come from Film Songs. We have known of film classics where songs set to classical ragas have been immortalised by Singers like K. L. Saigal, Surraiyya, Mukesh, Mohammed Rafi and the legendary Lata Mungeshkar and other great singers. A special responsibility rests on Film Producers and Music Directors in the matter of reviving and sustaining interest in our classical music. Surely there can be a fair mixture of lighter songs with accent on catchy tunes/rythm and songs with good classical base to convey the mood of different situations in any film. Without exception, all our eminent Music Directors have had training in classical music to start with. It is they who can compose tunes effectively and win the hearts of the listeners. This is an aspect which deserves attention of the Film Industry. So far as the 'market' is concerned, history has shown that it will certainly 'bear' it.

These then, are some thoughts on different ways in which appreciation of classical music can be awakened and effectively sustained. The roots of a nation are its classics and we owe it to ourselves, to our cultural heritage and to the flowering generations of our youth who, like torch bearers, will carry our classical heritage into the future. Every artist is inwardly an optimist and so let us end this essay on a note of optimism and hope.

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## CHAPTER 6

# THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF PERFORMING MUSICIANS

A lot of discussion is currently on at various levels through Seminars, articles and informed get togethers regarding the present state of classical musical art today. Quantative expension and wide dissemination have admittedly raised the social status of artists, induced fierce competitive conditions, qualitatively changed the standards of presentation and led to some commercialisation. Movements are being launched to popularise classical music, to take it to the masses which is just not possible in case of any classical art. Something, however, can certainly be done to improve the appreciation and understanding of classical music largely because many educated musicians have come into prominence and the educated youths are being drawn to classical music. The main forces in the field are (i) The music organisers including corporate bodies which have assumed the cultural responsibility of propagating classical music in different ways (ii) The vast body of listeners most of whom are not fully trained to be good listeners (iii) The Government with its vast patronage machinery for the promotion and sustenance of classical music (iv) The performing Musicians of various levels and description and lastly ( v) The Media symbolised by music critics, press, All India Radio and Doordarshan.

Each of these groups have some obligation and duties towards classical music. Amongst them the performing musicians together with the "Star System" have become a fairly powerful force to reckon with. Except the box office, the organisers and so some extent the media, there is

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practically no controlling influence over them. At the same time, the future of classical music depends upon how the performers today and in the years to come conduct themselves both on the concert stage and outside. We have lately been hearing a lot of complaints and a lot of demands raised by the performing musicians.

Now music is always a two way process, between the performer and the listeners. Action or stimulus is reciprocated by response from listeners. Leaving out the agencies named above, a time of reckoning has perhaps come for the performing musicians. There has to be some introspection, some inward thinking. Are the musicians aware of their responsibilities and obligations ? There are values and principles in music as an art which are far deeper than earnings, fame and the none too uncommon desire amongst the more successful musicians to perpetuate themselves in various ways. This is a matter which definitely merits a separate discussion and the present discussion is an effort in that direction.

Without digressing further, we have to spell out the responsibilities of the performing artists in the interest of proper propagation and the very survival of classical music. Our musical heritage is a sacred trust for the performers because, however great they may be, they are really the torch bearers of a tradition which has stood the test of centuries. They have no moral or prescriptive right to distort or break that tradition which has given them the largest measure of flexibility in the matter of projection, presentation and even creation of music. If we agree on this basic premise, the responsibilities of performing musicians should be easy to spell out.

(1) The first and greatest responsibility is total and unqualified commitment to classical music, come what may.

(2) The second is loyally to one's Guru/Gurus. We should like to go a step futher and say this loyalty must not be through lip service alone but should be demonstrated now and then by honouring and acknowledging the living gurus and the gurus who are no more. However talented a performer might be, he may not have had a guru in the conventional sense. But surely in his music, he definitely follows or emulates a master whom, in his hearts of hearts, he considers to be his "model" or "ideal" or "margdarshak". There is no logic whatsoever in his not showing respect to such artists. We know of self made artists, but claims made by some upstarts today that they have learnt from none and been inspired by none deserves to be detested and ignored.

(3) The performing artist of some standing should consider it to be his responsibility to transmit his knowledge to disciples and learners. Our tradition has survived very largely through the system of oral transmission of learning or the Guru Shishya parampara. It is also his duty not to exploit his disciples and give them talim according to their capacity. However diffcult it might be, the more promising disciples should be given some degree of individual attention also.

(4) Placed as we are today in an ethos of box office music, largely entertaining and exciting music—exemplified in hybrid melodies and all out reliance on speed baazi and stunts—, the performing artists owe it to themselves and their art to train the listeners to a higher taste, to a better understanding of the basics and refinements of our music. The artists in the earlier days definitely cultivated a higher taste amongst listeners and trained their ears and sensibilities. The present, in this respect, is in sharp contrast to the past. No one will deny that art should not change, that the urges of the listeners must always be ignored. But that does not mean that the performer should titilate the audience, give them cheap and exciting music and then turn round and argue that it is the audience who want such music. This is just not true. But the rat race has begun and in the name of searching new horizons, some (though not all) artists are consciously, willingly and perhaps deliberately straying away from the mainstream of parampara based music. A very large percentage of present day listeners are not really bothered about all this, nor even most of the organisers. Something must be done effectively to arrest this dangerous trend. If classical music is dictated by the man in the street, God help our parampara and music. In this context there is lot of sense in starting music appreciation courses, in responsible and constructive musical criticism and also in serious lecture/demonstration sessions organised by groups like Spicmacay and the Universities.

(4) Another dimension for the artists attention is maintaining purity of ragas presented and the integrity of the structure of classical music irrespective of whether it is vocal or instrumental music. Improper portrayal can do immeasurable harm by corrupting the understanding of the youngsters who are prone to take the performance and portrayals by established artists as gospel truth ! The artists must realise that they have a responsibility towards the youths and posterity.

(6) The next vital dimension is the duty and freedom to innovate, to find fresh horizons. This activity

has formed part of musical culture down the ages. Music cannot be static because the very law of art and life is change. The real question is change in which aspects, in which directions ? We live in the jet age. The world has become smaller. Barriers of distance, time, culture are being broken. Classical music cannot be a neutral art in such an ethos. Once again the safe and desirable course of action would seem to lie in innovating through qualitative improvement in art concept, in bold experimentation but without sacrificing the basic tenets, the rules of the game, or going out of the mainstream. In short innovation must follow some rationale or system. Let us gratefully remember, that our musical system gives extraordinary freedom and liberty to the performing artists. Let us also note that this freedom must not be mixed up with license.

(7) New compositions in existing ragas should be encorged for the lyrics of 100/200 years ago appear to be out of context with the present times. Similarly experimentation in creating new ragas is welcome. They must be musical and artistic creations. While presenting them the artist must take the audience into confidence and explain to them what is being presented and in what respect the 'chalan' or movement of the ragas differs from some of the existing or analogous ragas. This will give the artist celebral satisfaction and the listeners will have greater listening pleasure. When you have music in a system, the finer points and refinements can be understood and applauded. Why should artists not accept this approach ? After all, they have toiled hard and they must get appreciation where it is due.

(8) One important responsibility of artists is to perform

seriously and to the best of their ability. It is true that the best of artists have off days. But there must be no let up in their effort to make the best possible presentation irrespective of whether it is a high fee concert, a radio recital, or a recital for a charitable cause, or a recital for the benefit of students organised by Spicmacay where artists perform free. It is the art and not the forum which is really important.

(9) A sense of rivalry or a sense of remorse on being sidetracked are common human emotions and artist are human beings. Still, however, the art to which they are dedicated is far too noble an activity which demands a sense of tolerance, a spirit of give and take and a spirit of giving and forgiving. No artist however great is perfect. There is always room for improvement and so there is scope also for constructive criticism which has to be taken sportingly in one's stride. These values are getting eroded and urgently need to be revived and practised religiously.

(10) In this age of cut throat competition, runaway inflation and rat race in securing programmes, it may appear to be a far cry but perhaps the artists like other groups, must join hands and unite. Perhaps it is out of this attitude that socialism amongst artists, a sense of fair play or more pertinently some system of social security for the artists can be evolved and artists in distress can be looked after. Cooperative housing, creating insurance coverage are some steps which need attention.

These are perhaps a few issue which must constantly engage the attention and thinking of the performing artists in general and the star performers in particular. In the transmission of any tradition it is in one form our "heritage", For the future however what the performing musicians would leave behind will be a legacy. We are absolutely certain that all performing musicians would like to leave behind a legacy which is in keeping with their heritage, training and the great labour and toil through which they have risen to fame. In any test or reckoning to which the posterity may put the great artists of today, we fervently wish that they come out well, in glory and good grace. This will be possible only if the performing artists of today live up to their responsibilities in a spirit not only of grace but in a sense of humility and dedication.

# Section C

# Classical music and Society

## CHAPTER 7

## INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND CLASSICAL MUSIC

Human nature is a complex combination of various instincts, urges, strengths and emotions. Just as primitive man prided himself in his physical strength, virulence and superior prowess over the animal kingdom, similarly with the advent of civilisation he came to be governed by moral values, fellow feelings and over a period of time developed refinement of senses, softness and a love for nature and beauty. Slowly his rudeness and virility were balanced by a touch of softness which later developed into a fondness and yearning for artistic pursuits—a love for creations of nature, for painting and for music. The devlopment of music—both vocal and instrumental is thus the direct result, of the refinement of the human mind as distinct from the mundane preoccupations and constant struggle for existence and survival. As time passed, man mentally realised the existence of his Supreme Creator, of a great force and shinning light which drew him closer and induced in him a quest for the eternal and the infinite. This perhaps, was the fountain source of religious thought, devotion and finally the emergence of great religions.

This religious fervour, this desire for approaching the Supreme Being, resulted in a passion for art and music which really speaking, was a means to find peace through meditation and peace. This is how music came to be so closely linked with peace and continuing refinement of the human mind. A fine landscape, a glorious sunrise, the vastness of the ocean, and the sound of music invariably made man reflective and introspective. Through music

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and art he has tried to fathom his inner being, his aspirations and anguishes and ultimately to reach out to his Creator.

The sound of musical notes has always cast some sort of a spell over the human mind whether it be an individual or a group of persons. Vocal music has awakened social consciouiness, in different ways both through music and language. But instrumental music has gone even further. Its only language is sound and music, because instruments cannot speak any language like the human voice. To that extent instrumental music has demonstrated both its strength and capacity to transgress barriers of geography, nations, language, caste and creed. It is thus an artistic language which appeals to all races of mankind and is, therefore, totally universal in its coverge and appeal.

Now instruments are of various types all the world over —wind instruments, plucked instrument, bow instruments, percussion instruments. All these instruments in their formative stages basically made an effort to emulate the sounds of nature and of various species of the animal kingdom. These instruments, by turns, produced sounds similar to rustling of leaves, flowing rivers, the roaring of animals, the gait of animals and represented, in a sense, the inherent mimetic instinct of man to emulate the sounds created by Nature and animals.

In musical activity, man has rediscovered himself, found mental peace and solace, given to his rough exterior and struggle for existence a healing touch. It is well known that great musical compositions express the anguish and despair of the human mind and sometimes also its unbounded joy, colour aud excitement. If one listens to Raga Alap on an instrument, or the rustling sound of the flute, or the soft notes of the pianoforte, the expressive notes of a violin, the bass notes of the Veena, the steady beats of the Tabla, what feeling or sentiments do they create for man ? It is obviously

a feeling of peace, tranquility and of communion with both Nature and the Creator.

Have we ever asked ourselves one basic question—why is it that in every formal musical system that we have all over the world has only seven notes and not one note more or one note less ? Is it not a coincidence that the Sun's rays create a spectrum of only seven colours and not more or less colours ? Perhaps the answer to this is that in man's meditation and quest for peace he has universally come across seven moods, seven mores of religious and artistic thought and these have been reflected in the seven notes which we call in our Indian System "Sapta Sur". There must be other scientific explanations also. But the point I am trying to make here is the historical and mental acceptance by men all over the world of fundamental universalisation and the immutable identity of musical notes in every musical system.

Instrumental music has developed a system, an art, a science—instrument by instrument over the Centuries. New forms of expression and refinement both musical and technological have been developed. Along with solo performance, we have now duets, trios and finally massive orchestation of many instruments together producing melodic and harmonic patterns on different scales of musical notes. These experiments have brought peoples and countries closer and encouraged cultural exchanges and meaningful experimentation.

Music and particularly instrumental music, has been one of the greatest promoters of peace and tranquility. It has provided all along an ennobling diversion to man from not only his mundane activities but also from activities injurious to peace and social amity. Let us take the major issue of national integration. Instrumental music of Northern India and of Southern India have been a very powerful

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force of cultural and emotional integration in the midst of the many diversities in the lives of our countrymen. All art forms including instrumental music, sculpture and painting have brought the peoples of various States closer to each other and made them conscious of the great similarities in their moods, cultural heritage, joys, sorrows and aspirations. A sense of common cultural identity and heritage is a great force which promotes peace and amity. Ircidentally, one might refer to the similar musical tunes and instrumental accompaniment in the film songs of both North and South India. This trend started a decade or two ago and is now an accepted practice. The Sitar, the Vina, the Sarod, the Tabla, the Mridanga and of course the flute are now universally accepted instruments in India and abroad.

Finally coming to the international scene, the impact of instrumental music has been massive in the field of promotion of international peace, goodwill and understanding. Experiments in instrumental orchestration, in evolving rythmic patterns through percussion instruments have brought about a measure of international acceptance which is really quite unprecedented. Thus we have common musical experiences for the peoples of Asia, Africa and the West. Added to this, regular cultural exchange between countries in the field of music have enhanced understanding and appreciation of musical forms and encouraged new performance-styles. In all this, science and technology have helped immensely. The electronics revolution, the invention and refinement of devices for sound production and recording, have made the world musically much smaller and for once disproved the oft repeated saying "The East is East and the West is West and the twain shall never meet." The world has since vastly changed and new bridges of understanding have been built up. The future of mankind lies in peace, in survival and not in destruction. Instrumental music like other art forms

is a potent force in strengthening peace, amity and goodwill amongst the peoples of the world.

Classical Indian instrmental music except for its deep musical appeal has no language of its own and no lyrical or poetic exterior. Such however is its sound effect and soothing melodic attraction that even those who have had no initiation in classical music are drawn to it and charmed by it. The reason is quite simple. The quality of note production and use of graces ( meends ) have a profound sense of aesthetic fulfilment giving great peace to the human mind. We have in our own ways experienced these feelings and have derived great sense of fulfilment. Classical music induces a sense of peace and universal brotherhood. As with individuals so with groups, societies and nations. Classical music must therefore be seen as an integrating and uniting force not only at the national level but also in the international field. In this disturbed world of today we have to make a relentless search of all possible methods which may help to promote greater understanding and exchange of arts and ideas. We are certain that in this noble work, our classical music has a very significant contribution to make.

# CHAPTER 8

# INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND SOCIAL CONSCIOUSNESS

From the dawn of civilisation and from the very begining of time, sound and music have been an integral and inseparable part of civilised human life. Basically, music whether in vocal form or in instrumental form is a means of establishing communion for an individual with his Creator. Music, therefore, in any form is not only stylised, but also quite individualistic. At same time music is also one of the finest means of artistic communication with fellow human beings. It is a method by which man ennobles himself aesthetically and spiritually and also provides artistic entertainment to the listeners. When music is performed it at once involves the cultural and aesthetic elevation of not only the artist or performer, but also of the listeners, who are listening to the music.

Vocal music, from the very begining of human civilisation, has been the leader and the kingpin of all forms of music. Without doubt it has been the greatest single purveyor of the deeper artistic and musical urges of man and the means through which these urges have found artistic expression. As against vocal music, however, instrumental music is a derived form of music. Nevertheless, instrumental music is perhaps the finest extrapolation of the creative and inner urges of the artist and musical composer. In point of fact there is such a deep complimentarity between vocal and instrumental music that it is impossible to visualise any musical performance without both of them existing together.

Like literature, music has also a language of its own and the notes produced whether in abstract melody or any composition has some message to convey or some mood to create. Speaking metaphorically, the notes and nuances of musical sounds which ultimately go to make a musical picture or image, can be compared to a painter's brush and the colours that he uses in painting a sketch. The language of music, though different, is very largely common in both the presentation of abstract music, like raga alap or orchestral composition or even musical compositions having lyrical, poetic or art content. Instrumental music by contrast does not have any spoken words or verbal language. Still, however, it bears a much larger resemblance with vocal music in the sense that it can successfully portray not only abstract or melodic music consisting of musical notes and nuances presented in emotional and stylised form, but has also a language in which musical messages or feelings are sought to be conveyed. The keys of the piano, the breath of the shahnai, the plucking of the sitar and sarod and the percussion of tabla or mridang are not only the sounds of instrumental music but very largely constitute the language of instrumental music as it were. Instrumental music is presented in a highly abstract form and also in easily understandable and readily enjoyable fixed compositions.

In both instrumental and vocal music there is a bewildering variety of musical forms in which such music is presented. There is not only a large variety of musical instruments, but also different categories corresponding to the octaves and types of male and female voice. In vocal music, for instance, we have the form of abstract alap, dhrupad music, kheyal music, tappa music, thumri music, devotional music, regional music a wide-ranging variety of folk music and so on and so forth. In instrumental music also there are similar variations and if we construe even the main musical instruments of India, we have a formidable number of musical forms, compositions and styles.

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It is widely known that rhythm is an integral and inseparable part of music not only in the highly stylised abstract form of melody music but also in the faster movements of abstract music, let alone the musical compositions as such. In fact, rhythm is a part of nature and in specially noticeable in almost all the creations of nature starting with plants, flowers, water, wind and most conspicuously in the majestic and measured movements of various species of the animal kingdom. Who can deny that the gay strutting and preening of the peacock, the meandering movements of rivers and snakes, the sounds of the birds and animals and the majestic and artistic beauty of the movements of the animals have not inspired the composers of various forms of music ?

Universalism of music is a basic point which helps to foster international amity and goodwill. It has universal appeal and there are historical instances that suggest that musical performances have helped to build bridges of understanding and cultural integration among countries and civilisations. The emergence of North Indian music is a living illustration of what integration and assimilation of middle-eastern and ancient Indian culture could achieve. Instrumental music has another great advantage in the sense that it can freely cross the barriers of territoral and political boundaries between different countries. Like painting or poetry, music, therefore, helps to build up international understanding and goodwill and is, therefore, a unique factor in building up social consciousness not only at the national level but also at the international level. Since music has a universal charm and appeal it is but natural that the great social reformers and patriots and revolutionaries should have made use of music to awaken social consciousness for the advancement and wellbeing of mankind. Instrumental music has definitely acted as a tool in creating and moulding social awareness. We have various kinds of music, such as abstract melodic music, war music, devotional music. These forms of music have an undeniable effect in sharpening social awareness. Orchestral music—in which there is a varitable ensemble of all varieties of instruments such as plucked instruments, wind instrumnents, key instruments—creates a totality of music and a combination of harmonious melodies so much so that it resembles an integral mosaic of melody and harmony which reflect not only the diversity of international art and culture but also its basic unity.

Instrumental music has been very intimately connected with the development of dance forms whether individual or group dance. The two forms of art have along the centuries complemented and supplemented one another and served as a very forceful background to various human situations involving wide variety of feelings such as love, hatred, dedication and love for nature.

Community music whether in the form of instrumental ensemble or choral music on the human voice also indicates cultural affinity and psychological balancing of diverse individuals and groups. The use of large variety of musical instruments helps to express their complex and deeper urges. It has to be remembered that the technical importance and refinement of musical instruments all over the world have made it possible to create sounds, muances and effects which are extremely subtle and delicate and are definitely beyond the capacity of the human voice to emulate or reproduce. Experiments have been made to musically portray human activity engaged in developmental work or in industry or even in space activity through the use of instrumental musical effects and special compositions.

The human mind revels in individual brilliance which is provided by abstract music or raga music. As against this, men also have their deep collective instincts and these are musically reflected in harmonious music. The concept of harmonisation which is fundamental to western instrumental music involves the concept of using various octaves and scales of notes to produce third or fourth melodies resulting from the interaction of various instruments producing notes at the same time on different scales. Orchestral or band music have awakened even martial instincts of man. Thus it is that we have band music played to the accompaniment of vigorous marching by the army or concerted movements of jet aircraft or the splashing of waters through the movements of warships, submarines and arsenals.

Instrumental music has been very closely connected with the developments of various art forms. Instrumental music has played an important role in moulding and sharpening collective thinking on various social issues. There are instances where attacks have been successfully mounted on various social evils, which have plagued the society, through the presentation of these art forms. In fact this effort has gone a step further and imperceptibly these art forms like drama and folk plays aided by instrumental music have not only symbolised the condemnation of social evils but also lighted up the possibilities of social reform and change in future. The issues which have thus been taken up relate to communal harmony, national integration, religious and cultural unity, international understanding, the anti dowry consciousness and many such issues which concern our changing society.

In its unceasing effort to mould social consciousness, instrumental music has fortunately received the assistance of science in a big way. We have today available sophisticated hearing aids, public address systems, the radio, television, the audio-visual gadgets, records, cassette through which almost all forms of instrumental music can now bo projected in the manner desired not only to involve listeners or viewers but also to larger groups including the common masses from

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one point of the world to the other. Can it be denied now that instrumental music does not only mould social awareness, but also builds strong bridges of understanding between civilisation and civilisation, between countries and countries and between continents and continents ? It has, therefore, now been accepted almost as an international practice that various countries should have continuous cultural exchange not only in the matter of literature, but also arts and cultural traditions of different countries.

Instrumental music has thus been a great force in forging both national and international unity. Instrumental music is basically creative in nature and has already acquired an international and universal character. Instrumental music has now taken both the performers and listeners nearer to the Supreme Creator, besides influencing social awareness and moulding popular taste.

## CHAPTER 9

## MUSICAL CRITICISM AND THE MEDIA

The subject sought to be discussed in this chapter is really an extremely sensitive and difficult aspect of the musical system. It is true that music is vastly concertised today but the number of concert going listeners is a very small fraction of the general body listeners of classical music. Musical perceptions and opinions formed by actual listeners in concerts are no doubt important and reach far and wide through word of mouth, a bit of hearsay and a lot more by gossip. A much larger readership or clientele is, however, reached by the music critics or columnists who report in the newspapers on the performences of artists on the concert stage. Let it be conceded at the very outset that musical criticism or coverage by the press of programmes of AIR and Doordarshan has become a rarity, although these programmes are heard and seen by millions of music lovers across the length and breadth of the country. Musical criticism through press reviews in newspapers and very few journals of only concertised performances somehow gets a high premium, an importance or weightage which is totally out of proportions. Perhaps it is the glamour of the advertiser-organisers, heavy spending by corporate organisers, the social and fashion value of concerts which are made to appear prestigious—all these factors give music reviews in the press on exaggerated importance. Any fair judge is entitled to the view that this type of musical assessment or criticism is really lopsided if we consider the vast area and dimension over which classical music is projected and heard through various media outside the concert stage. Thousands of graded and some exceptionally talented artists regularly

perform over the radio and television and quite unfairly their assessment or criticism today is nobody's responsibility. The Weekly Radio/T.V. reviews on music are no reviews by any standards. By contrast, a few handpicked artists and stars who secure concert bookings in the larger cities get blown up and out of proportion publicity and coverage at the hands of the press critics. One is entitled to ask the press on what logic or grounds radio/television music is being kept out of the purview of musical criticism. The radio has local, regional and national tiers and so many hours of classical music are broadcast every day, leaving aside the National Programmes and Sangit Sammellans. As one finds today, recognition and applause usually go to the concertised artists only, even when it is known that bookings in concert programmes are not made on the basis of any rules or gradations but just on the arbitrary decisions of organisers and dictates of pressure groups. I am labouring this point because the stunts and gimmicks commonly seen in many concert performances, are not possible over the AIR programmes. This media is such that to create on impression the artist has to come out with something good and worthwhile. AIR is a media through which real serious music can be presented free from the dictates of listeners and organisers. And it is precisely this music which has been kept outside the purview of press review. What, therefore, press reviews cover are recitals of celebrities or influence-backed artists who appear on the concert stages of the bigger cities of the country. It is clearly a lopsided, illogical and unjustifiable situation.

Having identified the very limited field in which music critics of the newspapers operate, we may now examine different facets of this activity. Amongst both the performing musicians and the more discerning listeners, there is a general sense of dissatisfaction on the press reporting of classical music. This feeling of dissatisfaction may resutl from subjective reasons, or failure to accept criticism or the non-committal nature of comments made, the play up of phrases which can mean nothing or several things. There is a saying that one should be loud in praise and circumspect in condemnation. How much of this dictum can really be practised by the music critics has to be found out.

While it is not possible to lay down ethical guidelines for music journalists, there is one point which, though debatable, deserves mention here. The present day practice of some active performing musicians also acting as music critics does not appear to be morally justified. The reasons are not far to seek. Firstly, such critics out of a sense of fellow feeling or professional etiquette will be reluctant to fairly or strictly assess some artist's performance. If he is unduly critical, he will court unpopularity. If he is unnecessarily complimentary his assessment will be hackneyed and deprive the readers of a clear or comparative view regarding the standing, performance and potentialities of artists of different levels. The most objectionable feature is that, the pen being a mighty instrument, the performer music critic has a lot to gain by currying favour with star and powerful performers in terms of his own prospects, concert bookings and musical future. There have been instances where average musicians by virtue of their position and power as critics, have been appearing in concert bookings regularly and out of turn. Even the organisers would be happy to see that their conferences/concerts and artists selected by them are well commented upon by the columnists. Let us admit that this type of nexus and intertwining of self interest and professional advancement cannot but jeopardise neutral and fair musical criticism.

As against this view, it can be argued that the performing musician is a knowledgeable person and will know the value

of concert performances better than anybody else. A performer can be knowledgeable but not always a good critic or judge where other qualities like fairness, neutrality and objectivity are more important. Just as in politics there is a concept of "Philosopher King", there must be in music a similar concept of a musicologist, even a musician of yesteryears now in retirement, who has heard music over the years and really knows the ropes in classical music. He has no unfair expectations and he will tend to be a professional critic with expert knowledge in both music and listening. Such are the persons who will be fair and fearless critics. How many music critics of this background and dependability do we have in the country ? Will the presence and neutral functioning of such a group of professionally committed music critics be welcomed or to put it mildly tolerated in the long run in the present day conditions ?

This brings us to the next important point. There has been a mushrooming lately of a good number of otherwise well connected music critics who call themselves free lance music journalists. There is nothing wrong in free lance journalism but when it comes to being a music critic various pertinent questions arise such as commitment, training and background, objectivity, experience without which musical criticism of the requiste level cannot be expected. The musical scene is replete with music critics just in their twenties or early thirties having behind them some "visharad", some connections, some elementary training in music. Please imagine such critics commenting on the performences of artists like Bhimsen Joshi or Ali Akbar Khan, Kumar Gandharv and others. What can they write except praise in superlatives ? Can they assess brilliant performers in the second or third line and bring out fairly their strength and weaknesses ? It is generally such critics ( though not always ) who write in the newspaper columms. We have nothing against them as such. Some of them are really outstanding and show a sense of fearlessness. Their criticisms however tend to remain restricted to the younger artists or perhaps the less concertised senior artists because such criticism will have no unpleasant concequences. Thus what is likely to happen is that celebrities will easily get away with colourless and lack-lustre performances, while brilliant performances by lesser known or not properly concertised artists will be picked up for adverse comments.

Regular media and publicity support has become such a major dimension today that even the stars and celebrities are compelled to take the young and less experienced music critics quite seriously and even humour them. Instances are not wanting of the music critics being cultivated and brain washed by the stars and then is set in motion that very familiar drama of mutual admiration. There are also cases where slanted media support to artists has helped them to be extensively concertised resulting in just above average calibre artists regularly hitting headlines and then turning into celebrities. In place of hard talim, riyaz, sweating we now have publicity support to carry artists to fame and stardom.

It cannot be the intention of any fair judge to fault the music critics for some of the ills which plague the world of classical music today. Let us frankly admit, that it is the environment which throws up different classes and qualities of human beings. Besides, we always have the best with the mediocres and the ordinary. Even amongst music critics we have very eminent and competent persons who are extremely balanced, neutral and creative in their criticism. No artist or critic can claim to be perfect and one must learn to be generous to a fault now and then. As a performing musician I might submit that one learns quite a bit from the good reviews that appear now and then. If the artist cannot stomach even the mildest criticism, he would forfeit popular

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sympathy. If, on the other hand, a critic makes critical remarks not out of proper perception, knowledge or understanding, he enjoys immunity just because we do not have a vibrant and awakened musical opinion.

The basic question, therefore, must be the norms or standards of reporting. We have to identify the qualities of good music reporting and build up musical opinion in support of such qualities. What are the qualities we should look for in a music critic ?

(i) The foremost quality obviously is commitment to classical music and its traditions. In other words, the critic should have a fair measure of knowledge or understanding of our musical system to be able to fairly assess the skill and content of the artists performance.

(ii) The second quality is a judicial sense of impartiality or neutrality. This is indispensable irrespective of the cross currents of gharana rivalries, prejudices and above all overt support by some newspapers to certain artists stars or celebrities. Personally I have been deeply grieved to see that for, reasons not quite explicable, some venerated artists are either not well or adequately commented upon or worse still completely blacked out from reviews. This is totally unfair and a travestry of justice. We have on the other extreme, superlatively complementary reviews for some chosen artists and very often those who have attended the concerts in question are surprised to see the vast gap between what was performed and what was reported in the press. Both these positions are wrong and must be deprecated in very strong terms.

(iii) The third quality is precision in the language of reporting. One often comes accross reviews where the play up of words and phrases is such that nothing really emerges from the review. Worse still, such reviews may mean something or many things to different readers.

(iv) Music reporting is becoming quite difficult and complex on account of the vastly increased number of concerts. There is apparently a mis-match between the concerts to be covered and the number of good and experienced critics available. One feels that there is a case for some appraisal training courses or workshops in major cities for the music critics who are functioning today. Very senior critics of standing and musicologists reputed for their empirical out look may act as leaders in these seminars and workshops. Increased exposures and cross fertilisation of experience should be useful. Concerts can be arranged at the workshops and the participants may bring out their reviews. These reviews can be openly discussed and the artists on whom the reviews have been written should be invited to attend and react to the comments. We do not want any verbal duels, challenges or counter challenges but only a free and frank exchange of ideas. This would at least remove lot of doubts, confusion or suspicions and a greater feeling of understanding might grow. The idea certainly deserves a fair trial. This type of seminar/workshop discussion has not perhaps been seriously attempted in our country so far, although we have workshops galore on many subjects. In our view this is a subject important enough for Government, the Sangit Natak Akademi, the Newspapers and the large corporate giants to consider for appropriate action

(v) Music critics must also not be used for omnibus purposes. A music critic on classical music should not be asked to cover a folk or light music or devotional music concert as this leads to dissipation of effort and the situation is not also fair to the artists performing in such concerts.

(vi) The most ticklish issue, however, relates to the selection of music critics by the newspaper managements. No norms appear to have been developed on this issue. There is perhaps also no clear policy of the newspapers regarding musical criticism. This matter also deserves careful consideration since a few performing musicians of standing are clearly seen to be enjoying the support and blessings of some of the Press Barons and also of industrials tycoons. Much depends clearly on the policy of press managements on musical criticism and coverage as also on the quality of persons picked up to work as music critics by the newspapers. Perhaps much more thought has to go into this entire subject than seems to have been done so far.

(vii) It would be a splendid idea to regularly invite and encourage active participation of music critics in seminar discussions on different facets of classical music. Their interaction will be useful with both performing musicians and musicologists and other interests connected with the teaching, propagation and evaluation of music such as the U.G.C. the Universities, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, All India Radio, Doordarshan and a host of other prestigious institutions.

The subject of musical criticism and assessment by the press is indeed far too complex today and it would be highly impertinent for anyone, however highly placed or knowledgeable, to prescribe a list of 'dos' and 'donts' for the music critics. It is really a question of developing norms of functioning, a free play of honest and objective opinion, a sense of fearlessness,—in other words a standard and pattern of reporting which can be called balanced, fair and neutral. These are the qualities which we should cherish and cultivate so that good, traditional and creative music can be encouraged and the listeners may gradually be helped to develop a higher taste in our classical music. It is not that some of our music critics are not living up to these responsibilities. Many of them are doing very well indeed and to them we give our salutations. For the rest, all we can hope is that the qualities we are looking for will develop in them over a period of time on the basis of experience and self introspection. The artists and listeners have great expectations from them and personally I have every hope that these expectations will not be belied. Let us conclude with our deepest regards and felicitations to all our music critics friends for the difficult job they are already doing under quite trying circumstances and wish them god speed and support from all quarters.

## CHAPTER 10

## INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC AND THE WEST—INTERACTIONS, EXPERIMENTS AND RESULTS

Indian art and its music in particular have historically commanded international respect. Accross history, many art lovers and important personalities came to India to study and enjoy its arts including music. Apart from such isolated individual interactions with our music, history testifies to massive and large scale interactions following political invasions and conquest of India. Those who entered as conqueors, however, came to stay in this land and had brought with them their music and instruments. This is very much true of the Persians and Mughals. What, however, is more significant is that due to their greater geographical proximity to India compared to the distant Western countries, musical afftinities were on the cards and over the centuries a process of musical metamorphosis better signified as cultural assimilation had started and subsequently taken deep roots. The developments and changes in the Indian classical musical system were thus part and parcel of this process of cultural assimilation. Such, however, has been the resilence and flexibility of our musical system that in this process, our music did not lose its individuality or separate artistic identity both as a system and art. Our music assimilated what it found congruous, compatible and best in the musical systems of the Middle East and West Asia. This has been all to the good in the sense that our music kept on developing, changing and searching new vistas and fresh directions for improvement. Truly speaking these developments were not exactly new or unknown to the Indian Musical culture. The process of change that went on from say the 11th to the

20th century was perhaps a repetition of what had happened following the entry of the Aryans into the plains of North India with their Vedic hyms, religious rites and a culture imbued with devotion and a spirit of abnegation. This explains why in India the indigenous classical traditions, unlike other traditional Societies of the world, were not relegated to museums or archives. Their place, unlike elsewhere, has not been taken by occidental forms. Perhaps due to its inner momentum and vitality, our musical tradition acquired a living force and survived the disturbances and imbalances of centuries resulting from fighting, chaos and disturbances of many kinds.

When we talk of Indian Music and the west and their interaction, if any, we have to look at the issue from two or three points of view. The first obviously is the extent and quality of interest taken by Westerners ( principally the British rulers ) in the Indian classical musical system. The second is the type of attempts or efforts made by Indians-musicologists and performers—to carry and project our traditional music in Western countries. The third is the extent to which Indian Musicians succeeded in imbibing or assimilating the essentials of Western Musical system and conversely the assimilation by Western musicians and music lovers of the classical music of India. For the sake of clarity we could take up the points one by one and then see if we can reach any specific or broad conclusions.

The first issue relates to the interest or studies undertaken by Westerners in Indian classical music. As we have seen, the alien rulers prior to the British came not merely to conquer and rule the country but also made this country their home and were ready for intermixture of culture, art and even social customs. But this unfortunately did not happen with the British who entered first as traders and step by step changed themselves into the rulers of this country.

They ruled India from a distance, for the officials starting from the Viceroy downwards were merely here to do the biddings of the British Govt. and carry on with political domination, trading activities, which resulted in explotation of India as a colony of the British Empire. The quality of British interaction with Indian classical music certainly could not have been of the order of the Persians and Mughals. They were not keen to learn the art and for most of the time considered our music nothing more than a pleasure and pastime of the Indian rulers whom they suffered in the wider interests of the Empire following the bitter lessons of the Mutiny of 1857 or what might be called the first open war of independence for this country.

We have however, to take a very careful note of the basic traits of the British rulers. They had brought with them the Western spirit of enquiry into India's heritage and past. Keeping the basic interest of colonial domination intact, the English officials, educationists and intellectuals displayed very wide interests which extended from studies of Indian flora, fauna, tribal customs and society, to fine arts. Thus we had great English scholars who worked on all these subjects including wild life, local customs, religious tenets. They included outstanding civil servants, professors and even men from the British Army. It was but natural that they turned their attention also to the state of our arts like music, sculpture and painting. As a result, a lot of literature on these subjects started being published. Talking specifically about Indian music, the first publications came out in the earlier part of the 20th century perhaps a little before even Pundit Bhatkhande and Paluskar had undertaken studies to codify, standardise the Indian Melodies and reduce a large number of compositions in these melodies into a regular system of notations.

The first amongst the British scholars to produce very

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serious and authentic treatises on Indian music were Mr. A.H. Fox Strangways and Mr. H.A. Popley. The former wrote the "Music of Hindostan" (1914) and the latter "The Music of India". Mr. Popley came out with his book in 1921. Mr. Popley in his salutation to Mr. Strangways wrote "India can never be too grateful to this musical scholar for the limitless labour love and imagination he has lavished upon Indian Music". The tribute is true both in words and spirit. In his own important book Popley rather modestly said that "this little work is sent out into the world in the hope that it may help to make known the great value of Indian music and that it may play some part, however small, in the improvement and spread of this culture throughout India".

Let us admit in gratitude, that these great scholars were sincerely attempting a revival or resurrection of our musical traditions much in the same way as the great German scholar Max Muller rediscovered the Vadanta Philosophy and essence of the Sacred Vedas. Such an effort is by itself highly commendable and what we did not get from the British rulers in the shape of active pursuit, learning and presentation of Indian Music was compensated by scholarly writings on our musical system which helped us in developing and in better understanding the system which lay behind Indian classical music.

A question that regularly arises is that having struggled and gone thus far, why did the British not take to the practice and performance of Indian music ? Perhaps there is to my mind, only one explanation to this. The Western musical concept is not the same as the Indian musical concept. Western Music is based on the concept of harmony and ensembling of notes emerging from different scales. Indian Music, on the other hand, is based entirely on "melody" with fixed scale of notes. The Indian system, goes beyond—extending to refined portrayal of Ragas or melodies, using

( in contrast to stuccato notes ) "meends" or graces as also "strutis" or semi tonal notes in Raga Alapa. With this sharp conceptual difference the meeting ground for the two systems has not been large enough and has necessarily remained confined to intelligent research and experimentation. In sum, therefore, the English contribution has been in the field of theory, system and research of Indian music but not in its practice, performance or propagation.

The fundamental point is that in Indian music the notes are members of a form or melody already supplied by tradition and the newness is created by their graces and arrangements, while in Western music they create new forms as the music proceeds. Thus there is creativity in both the systems but the methods and philosophy are different. From the mystic standpoint, western music speaks of the wonders of God's creation. Indian music hints at the inner beauty of the Divine in man and the world. Indian music requires of its listeners something of that mood of divine discontent, of yearning for the infinite and the sublime. Thus it is possible to awaken interest largely by way of acquaintance with the Indian musical system so far as a westerner is concerned but his total emotional integration with the fundamental ethos of classical Indian music is not perhaps possible.

To continue once again with the British contribution to the study of classical music of India, reference has to be made to pioneering works like "Musical Modes of India" by Sir Wilson Jones. "A Treatise on the Music of Hindustan" by Capt. Willard, "Grammar of Music" by J. D. Paterson. "Some Indian Conceptions of Music" by Mrs. Maud Mann. "Sanghit" by Fancis Gladwin and others. These works testify to the great devotion, verging almost on a missionary zeal, which must have gone into detailed studies, discussions on the old texts and ceaseless sifting of evidence, data and inferences. These writers' believed that "Indian Music possessed so much value for the life of the people of India that, in this great day of national aspiration and progress, it ought to be known and understood by every man and woman who has India's good at heart, so that it may become cultivated in every city and village throughout the land." Let us admit in gratitude how very prophetic these words would appear today forty years after Indian Independence, although the thoughts were nurtured by English writers almost a century ago. If these early thinkers set the ball rolling as it were, it was people like Rajah S. M. Tagore, Bhatkhande, Bhandarkar, Paluskar and many others who picked up the threads and vigorously continued efforts to spread the education and culture of classical music with the help of princely states, zaminders and the richer sections of the rural and urban socity of this vast country. Today we have indeed come a very long way after independence with the teaching and culture of music having spread phenomonally far and wide. Independenee opened the gates of the world and the West in particular and cultural exchanges between India and the West increased very considerably and this resulted qualitatively in a different kind of musical interaction, a massive export and propagation of our music abroad, the like of which never took place in the past.

We may now turn to the second and rather interesting part of our study namely efforts made by our musicologists and performing musicians to project and spread our classical music in the Western countries. There is no clear historical source to ascertain the first or maiden effort which may have taken place. The first sporadic and isolated efforts perhaps took place during the last quarter of the 19th Century. No exchanges took place during Mughal period or the earlier part of the British period. In general, instrumental music was the first to be projected and for obvious reasons vocal

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music has not even today ( except for some Dhrupad Music and professorial assignments for khayal singers ) been able to make much headway.

The first journey to Western countries was perhaps by Ustad Shamsuddin Khan ( Sitar and Surbahar ) of the Jaipur gharana and the uncle of the authors' Ustad Abid Husain Khan. The author has the proud prievilege of owning the Jaipur Sitar which was carried by Ustad Shamsuddin Khan to Europe. The visit took place in the Summer of 1894 and the Ustad performed before aristocratic audiences in three centres of Europe namely Rome in Italy, Paris in France and London in England. In the early part of the 20th century ( the exact year is not known to the author ) Ustad Sakhawat Hussain Khan, the noted Sarod player of Lucknow visited England and ably demonstrated the traditional playing of the Sarod. There were possibly some other indidual artists also who visited Europe for performance. The next major projection of Indian Music was by Ustad Allauddin Khan of Maihar who accompained Uday Shankar, the internationally famous Indian dancer, in his European tour as the top musician and adviser to the music troupe which Uday Shankar had taken with him. This visit of Ustad Allauddin Khan, a master of several Indian instruments including the Violin helped to open up the presentation of various Indian Instruments to the common listeners of Europe ( not royalty or aristocracy alone ). With his great receptivity, Ustad Allauddin Khan imbibed some of the technical excellence of Western Violin players, developed fresh ideas on Indian orchestration and also brought with him ideas relating to roythmic variations/patterns and also use of harmonic effects on Raga Music for which both the Sarod and Violin were ideally suited. The visit of Uday Shankar to various European countries covered several years of the decade 1930-1940. Around this time, the authors' father late Amulya Chandra Mukherjee ( 1933-1935 ) who had gone to Paris for his doctorate in mathamatical statistics carried with him the original Sitar which was taken by Ustad Shamsuddin Khan in 1894 to Europe. Shri Muhkerjee while pursuing his studies, also performed on the Sitar in Paris, London and Berlin before returning to India towards the end of 1935.

The Second World War intervened and all cultural activities were totally suspended. The end of the war saw several nations including India rise from their dull stupor of centuries, exploitation and marching towards their cherished goal of national independence. The revolutionary struggle for freedom came to a near miraculous end but not before the heavy price of partition had to be paid in terms of blood, sweat, tears and the uprooting of millions from their homes and seeking shelter elsewhere. Amidst toil and chaos the Indian nation led by great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Pundit Nehru and others took up the herculian task of nation building exemplified in agricultural revolution, industrial expension, spread of education, foreign policy and many other constructive activities. By the mid fifties when the country had somehow regained its breath, thinking started being bestowed upon cultural resurgence. Cultural agreements with various nations were signed, the Radio was expanded and later the Indian Council for Cultural Relations was set up. It was a virgin field and opportunities for performing artists started emerging. It was at this stage that imaginative, talanted and far seeing artists like Pundit Ravi Shankar started making musical appearences quite regularly in U S A and Europe with almost unprecendated success. It was, in every sense, a pioneering effort for Ravi Shankar—early upbringing in Paris, his education, his training under Ustad Allaudin Khan, his sojourn abroad with his famous brother Uday Shankar and the confidence and blessings he enjoyed from Pundit Nehru—all these put him in a key position in the international cultural map and he brought accolades for India by becoming a performer of international repute and an undisputed cultural ambassador of India abroad. The lesson of history is that chances are not always evenly or equally distributed and men particularly artists are also often wanting (though talented) in the capacity of seizing the high tide of opportunities. Following Ravi Shankars' example, the Sarod maestro Ustad Ali Akbar Khan shifted his activities to U S A both for concert performances and teaching pupils in the West. Between the two of them, they covered the U S A by setting up schools and giving concert performances in both U S A, Europe and the Far East.

Other eminent musicians followed but largely as concert performers. All said and done, the net result was the massive propagation of instrumental music so much so that it became almost an export item and materialistically involved a boom for the manufacturers of Sitar and Sarod, which became internationally recognised musical instruments. The ICCR kept on sending musicians of all varieties under the exchange programmes. Subsequently Dhrupad singers and Bin players also made sucessful tours of the West.

All this has now gone on for at least three decades. One is prompted to ask what the net outcome has been in terms of genuine propogation of our classical music in the Western countries with a different mental and cultural ethos. The author is not aware of any penetrating study in this aspect of the question although stupendous funds and resources have gone into these activities by the Indian Government and the ICCR. In attempting any assessment therefore, one can make intelligent and objective inferences based on experience and observation. The author has had the privilege of listening to the Western artists performing Raga Music, of himself performing abroad several times and interaction with several Western student scholars belonging both to USA and European nations many of whom searched the author out to collect information on the evolution and techniques of playing of the Sitar and the Bin. They came with an open mind and for once it appeared that their interest in the roots of our musical system and culture had been awakened. The author would just not venture to say if our performers in the West could not fully satisfy their urges or that the Westerners had a feeling that without a visit to its land of origin and contact with artists and musicologists brought up in the strict and traditional style, a real insight into classical Indian music would not be possible.

One view commonly expressed is that the first flush of enthusiasm and interest in classical Indian music is over in the West. Interest is flagging though a hard core of students and musicians of the West are still holding on, The author would like, at this point, to share some of his concert experiences in the West. Though it would be absurd to deny that there is lack of serious Western listeners, the hard fact is that the concerts are by and large, attended and patronised by Indians settled in those countries. It needs a lot of advance planning and preparations to get good Western audiences at the concerts.

Once the wave of performing abroad started, mediocre, ill trained, half trained musicians managed, through influence and contacts, to go abroad. Perhaps, over the years the call of the dollar seems to have been much more powerful than the serious and high standard of presentation of music. In Indian parlance the saying goes that the "Yogi has turned into a Bhogi" i.e. a steadfast and committed performer has reduced himself to the level of a seeker of materialistic advancement.

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One more point will merit mention here. The listening crowds in USA and Canada, thanks to the discipline of those countries, always sit through the recitals silently and never make noises. But a seasoned performer can alwaye feel the pulse of the audience and the feeling is clear enough—virtuosity, speed and expertise rather than melodic excellence are more sought after. So what has happened to listeners in India during the last 40 years has also overtaken the Western audiences. The reason is simply that our performers and stars have unwittingly trained the listeners to a special type of taste and successfully applied the technique of literally capturing and subjugating the audiences. They have been doing this in India and also abroad. We are thus thrown back to the million dollar question—have we succeeded in projecting and performing our true traditional classical music abroad? The answer is best left to the reader's judgment.

We have now to turn to the third aspect of this subject. In the last three and a half decades of projection and dissemination of our classical music two more dimensions appear relevant and must be brought out—

(a) What is the extent to which Indian artists have been successful in imbibing or assimilating the essentials of the Western Musical system and to what extent there has been the dovetailing of Western ideas or concepts into Indian classical music?

(b) Conversely how much have Western musicians and Western lovers of Indian music been able learn, assimilate and develop proficiency in Indian Music?

These are indeed very difficult questions to answer. Propagation, giving concerts, starting musical schools are one thing, but aesthetic acceptance by Indian Musicians of the basic features of Western Music is quite a different thing. We have seen great examples like Ravi Shankar and Yehudi

Menuhin playing a duet but even on superficial listening one point surfaces rather clearly. The Indian melody system can be played very correctly and mechanically by a brilliant Western artist but it is necessarily alien to him from the point of view of the musico-cultural ethos to which he belongs. These efforts must be considered bold experiments only not indicative of clear cross fertilisation of Indian and Western musical thoughts or moods. It has been a great experiment and meeting of great musical minds.

The allied area is that of Orchestration. Here also experimentation only has taken place to a very large extent. Melody based Indian Music is ill at ease with Western harmonic movements with changing musical scales. A similiar problem arises when Western musicians try orchestration on Indian Ragas. What really has been possible is a massive musical ensemble with large number of instruments with varying combinations of note production. This can at best, be called a step forward towards creative musical ensemble reflecting the changing moods of the audiences and their urge for something new. Undeniably, it is not melody based classical Indian Music.

This then is the defacto position. We are at the cross roads of experimentation but experimentation only. The interaction between Classical Indian Music and Western music could be reduced to a few basic postulates—

(i) Phenomenal projection of classical Indian Music has taken place in the West.

(ii) The West showed considerable interest to start with but as soon as the first flush had gone, we were left with reduced numbers of Western connoisseurs, students and performers.

(iii) Indian and Western music have originated and developed in separate cultural ethos and the emotional make up of the musicians of the two systems are totally different.

(iv) Several Western performers have shown considerable virtuosity and knowledge and hopefully after years of practice and remaining with Indian music they might share the Indian ethos to some degree. It is better to compare such hopeful devolopments with, for instance, the culture and development of the English language and literature in different countries by different authors. May be some day we may have a Western culture or variety of classical Indian Music.

(v) Interaction between the West and Indian Music has enriched creative music through instrumental ensembles which strictly cannot be brought within the classification of orchestration as it is known in the West. But it is definitely a search for new frontiers.

Here perhaps we may close our discussion with the fond hope that in the future, the Western and Indian musical interaction may produce something more constructive. If anything, the barriers of ignorance have been broken down and Indian classical music has finally come out into the world and demonstrated its potentialities and powers of receptivity.

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# CHAPTER 11
# CLASSICAL MUSIC AND CREATIVITY

Before commenting upon the creative aspects of Classical Music, we must clearly understand the essentials of our musical system. Our classical music is raga or melody based. A raga is a special combination of notes in acsending and descending order in a scale of notes or swaras. Every raga has some dominant/fixed phrases and notes called vadi and samvadi and also 'chalan' or 'firat'. These are the basic parameters of raga music and remaining within them the artist has unlimited freedom and scope to present and make improvisations to create the raga and its mood. The compositions are set to the raga in certain "talas" or time beats or measures. The ragas are presented both through Raga—Alap ( Portrayal of raga merely through note production without using compositions ) and exposition with the help of compositions. These briefly are the rules of the game, as it were, of our classical musical system. Our system is unique in the sense that so much of freedom in improvisation of raga 'roopa' is without parallel in any other musical system of the world.

In such a system, creativity and music must necessarily go together. The artist is at once a creator, interpretor, and composer. This freedom of improvisation, however, definitely places a burden and responsibility upon the artist—he must not violate the sanctity of the system nor misuse the freedom the system gives him. Creativity also involves some degree of emotional commitment and personal involvement on the part of the artist.

The inspiration for creativity has come to man from Nature, the sea, rivers, mountains, the trees, the blue skies. Classical music has been a direct outcome of man's devotional nature and his quest for the Eternal and the Creator. Thus the oldest form of music has been religious and devotional music.

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Creativity has also been inspired by man's interaction with his environment and quest for the beautiful and the sublime. An anlysis of the historical evolution of music is the best illustration of the fantastic creativity of our musical system. Let us therefore take a look in that direction for a clearer understanding of musical creativity.

The origins of Indian Music are lost in legends of mythology and religion to which the origin of ragas has often been attributed. The first authentic evidence of classical music is connected with the coming of the Aryans and the music of the Vedas. The Vedic hyms were followed by the Prabandhas and the Padas which were the precursors of Dhrupad songs. The basic creativity of our musical system lies in the assimilation and synthessis of our music with music that came to India from outside. For eight to ten centuries this process has gone on which has revolutionised and enriched our music. This is why unlike other occidental systems our music has gained in resilience and variety and not been relegated to the museums. In this process new ragas, fusions, new instruments, new styles have emerged thus giving our music an unparalleled variety and richness. Our Vocal music, the different Vinas led by the Rudra Vina, the emergence of grand instrument like the Sitar and the Sarod took place followed by highly stylised rendering by various gharanas or schools of playing.

Another sign of creativity is the gradual shifting of the venue of musical presentation from the temples to the courts and then to the chambers and finally to the concert stage. While still music continues to be an elitist activity, the inner impulse appears to be that of carrying our music to larger groups of people. This has inveitably involved much greater and improved communication between performers and the listeners.

Apart from religious devotion, the other great source of our raga music has been the vast storehouse of our folk and regional music. The third source has been the profound imagination of master musicians and experimentation by scholars. This is perhaps the explanation for the great variety of our musical forms like Dhrupads, Dhamars, Khayals, Thumris, Tappa, Hori, Kajri, Chaiti, Kirtan and others. Alongside these vocal forms developed subtle styles in instrmental styles like Alap, Madh, Jor, Thok Jhala etc.

The force of creativity has led Indian music to fresh woods and pastures new through uncharted courses sometimes spontaneously and sometimes through necessity. The Dhrupad system over the centuries produced four distinct styles called Banis which were the precursors of the Khayal gharanas—Gaudiya, Dagar, Khandar and Nauhar Banis. Once the Dhrupads started declining, the Rudra Bin came forward and showed the way for detailed Vocal Alap in different phases. The decline of Dhrupad and development of vocal Alap threw open the flood gates as it were of the khayal style of music with different types of compositions in various tempos through the emergence of several rich Khayal gharanas. The raga vistar portion of Khayal singing directly came from vocal Alap and layakari from the rhythmic variations of the Dhrupad style.

This was the overall situation towards the late 19th and early 20th century the backdrop being that of royal patronage and a class of elitist listeners. Then came great personalities in the field of teaching and propagation of classsical music men like Bhatkhandeji and Paluskar who with the support of some of the rulers set up Music institutions and organised conferences to bring together the best musicians

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before the listening public. Alongside started the herculean task of standardisation of our musical system both in respect of the form of ragas and collection of compositions of various ragas from different gharanas, a truly original and massive effort which settled to a large extent the endless controversies and disputes regarding the correct position regarding the ragas, classifications and the authentic compositions. The volumes of Sangit Kramik Pustak Malika brought out by Bhatkhandeji was followed by the setting up of the Maurice College of music at Lucknow and a chain of Gandharva Sangit Vidyalayas in different parts of the country —Lahore, Bombay, Pune and Delhi. All this totally changed the music scenario of classical music, bringing music within the easy reach of the common music lovers.

These were laudable efforts indeed but the real changes of far reaching nature actually started after Independence. To a great extent, creativity did play an important part in all this but the sheer pace of change and qualitative developments left back many raised eyebrows. The hard realities of music having become a highly competetive profession, commercial factors, the entry of commercial houses as advertiser-promoters, the mushrooming of both artists and institutions, the all year round conferences and Festivals changed the musical ethos altogether and the sublime aspects of music started getting blunted. A new class of listeners made up of the new rich, simple music lovers and a very large number of pure fun seekers have now become a major part of the musical scenario. The new conditions also threw up a new set of performers who have tailored their music to suit the tastes and requirements of the new class of listeners.

Thus partly as result of creativity or desire to innovate and partly through commercial compulsions a new style of music presentation and appreciation have come about resulting in what is generously described as Neo-classicism.

No serious study has been made how far the music now cultivated and presented has strayed from the classical mainstream. Perhaps not many are really bothered about this aspect of musical degeneration in the name innovation and catering to what is called "the demand for music" or the changed taste of the public.

The changes which have come in the last 40 years have far exceeded the changes taking place in the last 400 years. It must be conceded that a musical system which has for centuries remained elitist must go through a process of devaluation in an open democratic and competitive society. No art can remain static for all time and change is the law of nature. There is only one question which is now and then raised. Was all this change really necessary and could we not have done with a slightly slower pace of change ? Why has classical music been made to stand upto market forces of demand and supply ?

Despite all this one must take a realistic and pragmatic view. We can certainly put a number of counter questions which may not be answered so easily.·········(1) What is wrong with mass listening and appeal ? Must our music remain confined to select performers and elite listeners ? Must not all cultural activities in a democracy be open to all ensundry ? (2) Is it really possible at this stage to reverse the developments and change the new ethos ? Can we deny that ispite of some dilution and commercialisation, there has a phenomenal expansion and propagation of our music both internally and abroad ? (3) Despite lowering of standards, can it be denied that highly talented musicians have emerged with high educational background whose music and virtuosity are reminiscent of old maestros ? (4) Tradition must always be respected but there can be no bar to experimentation. Music cannot be kept caged by conservatives and die-hards.

On one side we have creativity, on the other tradition. Sweeping changes in all fields of activity the world over are part of life in the present times. Music is also tending to become a respected profession.

Music has always been a two way process. On the one side is the performer and on the other the listeners. There is a constant interaction between them which is responsible for subtle changes both in the method and manner of presentation and changes in the tastes of the listeners. On both sides there is a desire to reach sublime heights and to discover and present music in a new light. The evolution of Khayal music would be a fine illustration of these subtleties. The Court musician of Emporor Mohmad Shah was Niamat Khan who was basically a Bin player and a singer of Dhrupads. His spendthrift ways and increasing indebtedness attracted royal wrath and adverse notice and soon Niamat Khan had to leave the royal court. For a long time this legendary musician remained untraced and in a state of obscurity. At this time Dhrupad music was tending to become stale due to unimaginative presentation and undue emphasis on grammar ignoring the melodic and aesthetic aspects. Niamat Khan was himself concerned at this development. After lot of thought and research, he worked out a new and simpler form of music based on the traditional ragas but set to easy and simplified talas played on the tabla as against the Pakhwaj. This style over a period of time came to be known as the "Khayal" style of music which finally succeeded and replaced to some extent the Dhrupad style. In his brilliant compositions, Niamat Khan took the pen name of "Sadarang"and the Khayal compositions sang the praise of Emporor Mohmad Shah.

Niamat Khan was a traditionalist. He did not sing the new khayals. Nor did he teach Khayals to his children or kinsmen. Instead he taught it to outside pupils. These well trained pupils started presenting Khayal music at various centres in North India and also performed in Delhi. Word soon reached the ears of the Emporor Mohmad Shah that very bright singers were singing a new form of music which was unique and beautiful. Soon the disciples were summoned to the royal Court. They presented their music which was thrilling and contained handsome references of praise for the Emporor himself who was described as a great patron of music and a versatile composer himself. The Emporor was just overwhelmed and wanted to know who had discovered and composed these Khayals. On learning about Niamat Khan, he had a royal team of emissaries sent to bring back the great musician. Thus Niamat Shah "Sadarang" was reinstated in the Court with greater honours and this also marked the triumphant commencement of the Khayal style of singing in India.

The event demonstrates how anguish, creativity and to some extent necessity were at the root of epoch making musical inventions. The Khayal style was only a starting point as it proved to be the precursor of many new ideas and techniques both for vocal music and particularly for instrumental music like the Bin, Sursringar, Surbahar, Sitar and the Sarod all of which drew not only from Dhrupad but in a substantial measure from the Khayal style. Creativity has thus acted as a catalyst as it were in the field of musical evolution and development.

For the first time in the history of classical music a good number of very highly educated musicians have emerged taking music not only to greater celebral heights and refinements but also giving the profession a much higher status than it ever enjoyed before. This is altogether a new dimension in in our classical music. Whatever may be the initial disadvantages of not getting the benefit of talim of a real high order, the fact is that really gifted musicians with a keen

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and sharp intellect have always displayed a high capacity of imbibing and assimilating the finer aspects and nuances of classical music. The power to differentiate and keeping out the inessential aspects gives to their music that element of repose and quality which one expects from the better and seasoned performers of classical music. This is a major change in the musical scenerio and must be directly attributed to powers of creativity.

The sense of creativity has further helped to bring about some measure of uniformity in the understanding and presentation of classical music which has helped its appreciation and understanding. As in democracy so also in the field of classical music, Education or musical literacy may not always precede understanding of music. In fact regular listening of good artists surely helps to cultivate musical taste. The only danger is that understanding may get somewhat vitiated by constantly hearing "adventurist" artists but that is a risk which is perhaps inherent in a free and democratic society as ours.

Creativity has found application in another major field. Inspite of the basic differences in the concept and philosophy of the Hindustani musical system and the Carnatic musical system, greater exchange and interaction, if not a fusion, are in evidence. Apart from the raga system the Tala systems have much greater degree of affinity. Now and then one comes accross lively duets of North and South Indian instruments. Tala Vadya sessions are also common and all this together are helping in the cultural and emotional integration of our country. This creative process has been helped very largely by the more educated and erudite musicians of both the North and the South.

Another major dimension is the increased exchange between musicians of the West and India. Though no fusion or real synthesis are possible, a new field for experimentation has certainly opened up. This applies particularly to the field of orchestration and instrumental ensembles. In recent years international meets on Rhythm and drumming have been held which nave once again demonstrated the universal character of the similarity in the rhythmic patterns the world over besides throwing up many new ideas in the development of our Tala system.

Creativity has been reflected in a big way in the formulation of new ragas. While all of them may not stand the test of time, some of them have gained popularity. Another integrating factor has been the gradual adoption of South Indian melodies in the North Indian system some of which have really come to stay.

Historically the main sustaining force behind our musical system has been the musicians' spirit of enquiry, their sense of curiousity, sometimes compulsions and sometimes the urge to innovate.

Two more features are perhaps relevant in any discussion of the influence of Creativity on classical music. The first of these is connected with the economic factors which govern and control to a great extent the present day speed of life. This is exemplified in the rapid & massive urbanisation of different ares of the country. Apart from the growth of cities and migration of people to the larger metropolitan complexes, the erstwhile rural ares are not what they used to be. The smaller towns are also changing in character and complexity. This point is relevant for our purposes for the simple reason that the ethos of leisure and quietitude in which Indian music was nurtured and developed are becoming are a thing of the past and classical music is now in the process of getting acclimatised to the new environment. In one word, there is little time to sit and stare and music has to make its place in the new situation. Basically shortage of time available for learning of music, the limited time in which an artist has

to build himself up, the struggle for existence and desire to make a name and rise to fame have created new types of conflicts. Without mincing words it has to be said that there has been an all round deterioration and erosion of standards. Leaving aside the artists, the listeners, whatever be their musical background, are also in hurry and their callings are many. All this has promoted a new style of presentation of music which is brief, exciting, entertaining fast and full of surprises, twists and turns. This really explains why the standard of both the music presented and standard of appreciation in a vast majority of cases have shown marked deterioration.

This is perhaps the price a newly emerging democracy has to pay in the field of fine arts in a fast moving jet age society. All the tensions and conflicts faced by Indian Music, which is inherently a slow moving contemplative and leisurely art along with the problems of adjustments are largely explained by this basic change and speed in our way of life. One only wishes that men of influence and the powers that be including eminent artists should have exercised greater control and moderating influence over the developments. Any way, some trends have been set up and we have to accept them and try to mould the future. It is our firm conviction that it is the inborn sense and capacity of creativity which will help us to restore the standards and traditions of our music in the future. What is meant here is not that we must blindly stick to outmoded traditions. We should clearly opt for change but the changes should be intelligent not just imitative in keeping with the classical mainstream and traditions.

How the future is to be moulded is a very big question and is outside the purview of the present discussion. Two or three points will however merit memtion here. The inevitable disintegration of gharanas and the out of proportion

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popularity of instrumental music have perhaps seriously threatened the two basic values of our musical system namely the Raga structure and the tala system. Music appears just as a means of entertainment and somehow excellence in music has been accepted as virtousity and capacity to reach fantastic heights of speed and acrobatics. Inspite of all the big defence put forward in support of present day styles of music one hard fact cannot be reversed or denied by any music lover in his senses and that is that our musical system was not conceived or made for speed and acrobatic presentations for their own sake.

Creativity is a source of strength no doubt but it should not be allowed to be a cause for destruction of the basic values and the structure of our precious musical heritage. It is perhaps a matter for concern that our Culture, Music and Fine Arts are being consciously commercialised. Open efforts are also being made to make them available as a Package commodity at the Utsavs and Festivals both inside and outside the country. This point is being raised here just to bring into focus the point—where are Creativity and Fine arts Policy really taking us ? Will somebody somewhere seriously ask for the entire question, the entire strategy to be reexamined, debated through open house discussions purely in the interest of our classical traditions and our precious musical heritage ?

# Section D
# Reminiscenses and Tributes

# CHAPTER 12

# USTAD ABID HUSSAIN BINKAR AND DHRUPADIA

Abid Hussain Binkar and Dhrupadia was a scion of the Rajasthani Binkar and Dhrupadia gharana. Born in 1908 in Jaipur, he was the elder son of the legendary Bin wizard Ustad Jamaluddin Khan Binkar of Jaipur Durbar. Abid Hussain received rigorous training in both vocal music (Dhrupad) and Rudra Vina and Sitar from his father and uncle Ustad Shamshuddin Khan, Surbahari and Sitaria ( a contemporary of Ustad Barkatullah Khan and Ustad Imdad Khan ). Abid Hussain was a master of melody and his excellence both in knowledge and performance ranged from vocal music (Dhrupad and Khayal), Rudra Vina, Surbahar to Sitar. Ustad Jamaluddin Khan Binkar was the son of Ustad Amiruddin Binkar and came in the tradition of the great Bin player Ustad Rajabali Khan of Jaipur, who in a musical contest prevailed over the legendary Binkar Ustad Bande Ali Khan in a concert at Jaipur Durbar for which the then Maharaja of Jaipur presented him a golden replica of the Rudra Vina. The other great exponent of the Jaipur Bin Gharana was Ustad Musarraff Khan who was a contemporary of Ustad Bahadur Sen (Binkar and Sursringar player) of the Senia gharana of Jaipur and later of Rampur.

The most fascinating part of the ancestral history of Ustad Abid Hussain Khan was that originally they hailed from Golcunda/Bijapur now in Andhra Pradesh. Legend has it that some musician families of lower Rajasthan ( for Rajputs originally they certainly were) migrated to Golcunda around the 14th century due to disturbed conditions. In the South, they received royal patronage. They cultivated

Dhrupad and Vina music and imbibed a lot from the instrumental styles of the South-based Carnatic (Veena) music. The founder musician was one Shahaji Sahab, whose forefathers were Vina players of the Khandari Vani of Rajasthan and North Western India. His descendents, particularly Rajab Ali Khan went back to Rajasthan and settled first in Alwar and then in Jaipur. Around the great genius and personality of Rajab Ali Khan grew up the legendary Vina players like Mussaraf Khan, Amiruddin Khan, Jamaluddin Khan ( Abid's father ), Sadiq Ali Khan ( father of Ustad Asad Ali Binkar ) and Shamsuddin Khan ( Surbahari and Sitaria ). They teamed up over the 19th and 20th century to give birth to the fabulous Bin gharana of Rajasthan. They certainly came into contact with the descendents of Mian Tansen from the side of Bilaskhan, and Surat Sen, who settled in Jaipur and in the course of interactions did imbibe some of the excellence of the Seniya gayaki and baaz as surely as the Senias also immensely benefitted from the rich musical style of this very distinguished line of Vina players and Dhrupadias. I am personally convinced that it must have been here that a very subtle but unmistakable metamorphosis and integration took place between the Gourhari Bani of Senias and the Khandari Bani of the Vina players. This is distinct and separate from similar horizantal integration that took place in the music of the descendents of Tansen's daughter Saraswati and her famed vina player husband Misri Sinh Chauhan. ( Naubat Khan )

It is perhaps this synthesis which activated improved techniques in the presentation of various facets of Alap and in the refinement of the Masitkhani style of Sitar play which was originated by Masit Khan, the tenth descendent of Tansen from the side of Bilas Khan.

It has been my great personal fortune to have been a "ganda bandha" Sakrid of the late Ustad Abid Hussain

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Binkar. Sir Sayaji Rao Gaikwad, Maharaja of Baroda, chanced to hear Ustad Jamalludin Khan's Bin music around 1910 in a morning concert in Varanasi. The royal listener and others were moved to tears listening to the almost celestial exposition of raga Lalit. That was enough for Sir Sayaji Rao Gaikwad, who immediately engaged Ustad Jamalludin Binkar as his court musician on a fabulous salary and assigned him the rare honour of imparting lessons in Surbahar to Her Highness Maharani Chimnabai Gaikwad.

Ustad Abid Husain Khan Binkar & Dhrupadia
( Baroda / Indore )

This was how my Ustad Abid Hussain after growing to the young age 8 or 9 years came away from Jaipur to Baroda. My late revered father Amulya Chandra Mukherjee had earlier learnt Sitar from Pandit Pashupati Missir in Varanasi and later also received lessons from Ustad Jamalludin Khan Binkar. It was around this time that Ustad Fayaz Khan (Agra) and Ustad Fida Hussain Khan (Rampur) and father of Ustad Nisar Hussain also joined as Court musicians in the Baroda Durbar.

Unfortunately, my Ustad Abid Hussain and his fore fathers did not come to Eastern India and were content to serve in the royal court in Western India and play to highly distinguished groups of listeners. To dispel doubts about their legendary and fathomless musical attainments, I should like to quote below for the benefit of readers, from the writings of Late Satya Kinkar Banerjee of Bishnupur gharana about one of the performances of Ustad Jamaluddin Binkar thus—

> "If the playing of Bin were only to create mere sounds and to arbitrarily play about with musical notes of a raga one need not feel sad at the gradual extinction of Bin. But this was not at all true. The first time I had the opportunity of listening to real Bin was in the Music Conference in 1919 at Varanasi. On the first day in the morning concert, the State Binkar of Baroda Durbar (Ustad Jamalludin Khan) played Desi Todi Alap with two Dhaivats. The listeners were overwhelmed and spellbound. Meeds (graces) ranging to six and even seven notes featured in the Alap. The melodic charm and the portrayal of the raga brought tears to my eyes. The performance still lingers in my ears."

I had met the late Satya Kinkar babu in the last years of his life at Calcutta and given him my musical backgrund. He held my hands in his own and said in a choked voice that you are blessed and fortunate to have received 'talim' from the son of Ustad Jamalludin Binkar. Such, therefore, was the excellence of Bin and Dhrupad music of the old masters. Their singular and undivided loyalty to the pursuit of music made them shun cheap popularity and craze for fame. I make bold to say that it is these selfless and dedicated musicians of yesteryears and the few left today who are responsible not only for reaching great heights of excellence but also for keeping alive the flame of musical traditions burning. I beseech all music lovers to be selfless and fair in their in their appreciation and support to real Khandani Music which has kept alive our 'silsila' or 'traditional' values in spite of great odds, privation, neglect and humiliation. We cannot allow such a luminous heritage to die at the altar of cheap popularity and want of understanding.

Ustad Jamalludin Binkar trained up the late Ustad Abdul Aziz Khan, the great Vichitra Bin player. Another of his brilliant pupils was Abbas Hussain Khan Binkar (Son of Ustad Shamsuddin Khan) who died at the very young age of 23 years. I have heard from the late Ustad Atta Hussain Khan of Agra Gharana (who spent many years at Calcutta) that the Bin music of Abbas was so fabulous and enchanting that after his recital great maestros hesitated to perform on some pretext or the other.

Reverting to the main theme, my Ustad Abid Hussain remained a court musician in Baroda Durbar till about 1938. He presented my father the Jaipur made Sitar of his uncle the late Ustad Shamsuddin Khan. The instrument is still with me and is now over 125 years old. It has seven strings with Kharaj-Pancham with wide frets and 14 tarafs. This destroys the contention that sitars of Jaipur had no chikari and that alap in sitar in the lower octaves was not known in the nineteenth or early 20th century. Ustad Shamsuddin Khan carried this instrument to Rome, Berlin and London in 1894 and performed before royal audiences. My late father Amulya Chandra Mukherjee carried this instrument again in 1932-33 to Paris and London when he had gone there to obtain his doctorate in Mathematics and Statistics.

Ustad Abid Hussain joined the service of the late Nawab of Janjira, a small island state off Bombay in 1938 and spent about 13 to 14 years there. He regularly visited Baroda and gave me lessons in vocal music and Sitar. On 3rd February, 1948 (Vasant Panchami) I went through the "ganda-bandhan" ceremony at Baroda where I was brought up and educated. Later on Ustad Abid Hussain shifted to Indore where he worked for some time with All India Radio and after a brief illness passed away on 10th Decemmer, 1978 at Indore.

Ustad Abid Hussain Binkar's first wife was Srimati Maniben from Rajasthan, a cousin sister of the Vocalist Late Pandit Maniram. She had a fabulous collection of Khayals and Bhajans of the Jaipur gharana and had profound knowledge of traditional and obscure ragas. She had graced my "ganda bandhan" ceremony by her presence and had blessed me. Ustad Adid Hussain's marriage was not in keeping with the last wishes of his father who had wanted his marriage to be arranged with the daughter of Late Ustad Bhikan Khan Sitaria of Baroda. Unfortunately Ustad Abid Hussain had no issue by his first wife and his wife predeceased him in the late fifties. In the mid sixties while at Indore he married a hindu widow Ratnabai and had three step daughters. Here also Ustad Abid Hussain had no issue. The gharana line through kinsmanship thus ended with the Ustad. Amongst the disciples, Ustad Abid Hussain had taught my father Late Amulya Chandra Mukherjee, both Surbahar and Sitar, and my late mother Smt. Binapani Mukherjee, vocal music. He had also taught vocal music to late Shrimati Arunadevi Mukherjee of Baroda, daughter

of Smt. Progyasundari Debi of Tagore family and Laksmikanta Bezbarua, the famous Assamese writer and wife of late Rajya Ratna S. V. Mukherjee, a top civil servant of Baroda Durbar and mother of the famous dancer Smt. Ritha Devi now settled in U. S. A.

Ustad Abid Hussain had only two "ganda bandha" Sakrids namely, Shri Purshottam Das whom he had taught Pakhawaj, Tabla, Dilruba and Vocal Music, and myself whom he taught Vocal Music Surbahar and Sitar. Shri Purshottam Das was a member of the Baroda State Music Orchestra and passed away in mid sixties in Gujrat to the best of my knowledge. I did not see him after 1970 when I occasionally went to my Ustad then staying at Indore. The younger brother of Ustad Abid Hussain was Sajjad Hussain who after receiving initial training left India and settled in Baghdad in the Middle East where he passed away. I have, unfortunately, no information about his family or his children or Sakrids. It is improbable that he would have trained up Sakrids in the Middle East. This then is the history and background of my Ustad Abid Hussain's life. A word now about his music, staunch traditionalism, and the impressions some leading musical maestros of India had about my late Ustad.

His knowledge of Bin, Dhrupad, khayal and Sitar was phenomenal. It is a pity that temperamentally, his Khandan was opposed to recording of their music in the fear ( such conservative traditionalists they were ) that their records may be played in pan shops and wayside hotels. The All India Radio may be having some of his Archival Bin and Vocal recordings done in his advanced age from which the richness of the tradition he represents can be gleaned. He was a contemporary ( though younger ) of Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Ustad Amir Khan, Ustad Vilayat Hussain ( Agra ) Ustad Mahmud Khan Binkar ( father of Rais Khan Sitaria ) and Ustad Dabir Khan, all of whom personally held him in very high regard. Another of his personal friend and great admirer, was Ustad Mushtaq Ali Khan Sitaria of Calcutta, who has just left us and who was amongst the last surviving Sitar players of the Jaipur Senia gharana. The late Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan Sarodiya and late Ustad Ahmed Jan Thirakwa had told me in the sixties that my Ustad Abid Hussain was amongst the great living 'kalavants' in Bin, Dhrupad and Khayal music in India.

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## CHAPTER 13

## AFTAB-E-MAUSIQUI USTAD FAIYYAZ KHAN

The living legend of vocal music that Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was in his own lifetime and later, makes it rather difficult to attempt any essay on his life and music. So multi-coloured and so multi-faceted was his musical genius that it is indeed a problem for someone who had seen his music and life-style at close quarters to pick on any specific aspect to write on. He was a many-sided genius both in his music, his personality, his magnanimity and simplicity of mind, which indeed are the qualities of the truly great. Before we come to his music and start his life story, a word or two about his magnetic personality and great personal charm may not be out of place.

Standing about six feet in height, with a complexion of gold and emerald dressed in gold embroidered bhar-jari sherwani and chust pyjama, a flowing mouchtache, longish eyebrows, shinning eyes, and a flowing colourful turban or "safa" on his head—these conjured up to make a personality whose presence was at once compelling and attractive. We were literally drawn towards him. He was fond of many good things of life like good food and he had a purticular weakness for "attar" or perfume which he regularly used himself and greeted his musically near and dear ones with it. Once at a musical festival in mid—twenties at Nizam's Durbar in Hyderabad, being mistaken ( on account of his personality, grace and presence ) the Nizam personally led him to the special enclosure meant for rulers and royal guests and seated him close to his own throne chair. There was naturally a sense of consternation all round but the Nizam having come to learn about Khan Sahib's identity loudly said that he had seated Faiyyaz Khan in the right place for he was a "King in his own right in the field of music."

I had the rare privilege of seeing Ustad Faiyyaz Khan at close quarters at Baroda (where I was brought up) during the last thirteen years of his life. Khansahab was a good friend of my late father Amulya Chandra Mukherjee who apart from being a senior civil servant of Baroda Durbar was the chairman of the "State Committee for Adjudging Musicians." I recollect often the colourful scene of the great Ustad sitting at the centre of the stage flanked by great artists supporting him from behind by turns and they included men like Ustad Ata Husain Khan, Ustad Khadim Husain Khan, Ustad Azmat Husain Khan, Ustad Moujud Husain Khan, Ustad Latafat Khan and that bright star ( alas, he is no more ) Ustad Sharafat Husain. I just cannot describe the brilliance of his music, raga alap, voice modulation, "Pukar", a series of bandishes starting from Dhamars, Khayals, Thumris, ending sometimes in even bhajans—which the great Ustad presented. In one concert in Baroda at the "Wankaner Theatre" stage ( not hall ) I recall Khansahab's Alap in Miyan ki Malhar followed by Hori Dhamar and the famous Khayal, "Barasan Lagi" in teental. This raga was rendered for a full two hours and fortyfive minutes with changing moods, colours and phrases. In the short interval that followed, we went out for a breath of fresh air and believe me that warm April night we almost smelt rain and monsoon in the air and one of my friends said he felt a few drops of rain water fall on him. Legends and stories apart hearing was believing in this case. In another concert, I had heard Khansahab render Yaman for two hours followed by Hori Dhamar. Someone from the elite audience asked Khanashib to switch over to Khayals. Khansahab promptly replied with a captivating smile "Let me complete the Dhamar otherwise friends and critics might say that Khansahab sings Nomtom ( alap ) and does not know Dhrupad or Dhamar and starts singing Khayals". This is how he silenced his critics in a highly polite manner.

There is a "flash back" to this as it were. To this, we may now turn. The world of music, with all its grace and charm, can be a queer place indeed. How else can one explain that a living legend of music, an acknowledged master in practically all branches of vocal music like. Fayyaz Khan had also his staunch critics and enemies ? Representatives of the old traditional khayal gharanas starting with Niamat Khan Sadarang of Delhi gharana and Nathan Pir bux of Gwalior gharana held rigidly that "Alap" and "Nomtom" had no place in Khayal Music. In fact they held that the "Vistar" and "badhat" portion of the khayal had been built exclusively upon the superstructure of Dhrupad Rag Alap. What logic could there be for the repetition of the same stuff through abstract Alap and Nom Tom as a preface to the khayal ? Very sound argument no doubt, but some of the Khayal gharanas had emerged from Dhrupad gharanas and had a really strong Dhrupad base. Ustad Faiyaz Khan who came from the Agra gharana was certainly one such gharana. A total renunciation of Alapchari for them even in khayal music was not quite possible and so the practice of making Alap before presentation of khayal was common in that gharana. The Gwalior and Jaipur gharana khayalias had fully renounced "Raga Alap" unlike Agra khayalias.

Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was a bit of a rebel and was not to be cowed down so easily. He kept in touch with Dhrupad Vidwans and exponents and soon found a way out. From the old music lovers of Baroda, I had learnt quite reliably that sometime in 1928 or 1929 the Dhrupad Masters Ustad Allahbande and Zakiruddin had come to stay with Ustad

Faiyyaz Khan at Baroda and stayed on for about three months. Being Vidwans and his seniors, Faiyyaz Khan enriched his Alap repertoire in their great company and developed a very wide canvas of all the four 'angs' of Vocal Alap.

Having crossed the first hurdle the second but more difficult one was to reconcile or rather integrate his Alap into the general body or scheme of khayal singing. Legend has it that he was advised by Allahbande Khan and Zakiruddin Khan and also Nathan Khan ( Father of Vilayat Husain Khan ) that a Dhamar piece could always be sung after detailed Alap and this could then be followed by singing of Vilambit, and Drut khayals and taranas with conplete safety.

Thus armed and fortified Ustad Faiyyaz Khan ( who was a veritable storehouse of both Dhamars and Dhrupads ) gave his maiden performance of Alap in Darbari kanada in a royal concert at Baroda Durbar in 1930 followed by brilliant Dhamars and khayals. There was unending applause and ovation and the news spread like wild fire accross North and Western India. It took a little time but all criticism regarding Faiyyaz Khan flouting and violating the rules of khayal singing fell silent. This time not only the hard liner khayalias but also the Dhrupad singers and even Binkars came out with full throated praise. It was perhaps Faiyyaz and Faiyyaz Khan alone who proved to the world that our Classical Music is one indivisible entity and Dhrupad, khayal, Bin, and instruments were only its varied expressions. We have had great khayal singers but Faiyyaz Khan surpassed them in that he was also a great creator and could mastermind innovations in performance remaining strictly and firmly in the traditional mainstream of our music.

In another concert khansaheb sang his famous

Jaijaywanti and from among the listeners, being a mixed lot, a Gujrati Sethia ( merchant ) made a 'farmaish' for a bhajan. Khansahab replied in Gujrati that for a bhajan the listener would have to wait for a little more time. In another ten minutes Khansahab had ended his Khayal and switched over to a Kabir's bhajan in dadra in the same raga Jaijaywanti. It was a composition musically improvised on the spot and the audience was thrilled. Such was the grace of Khanshahab. I can multiply such episodes but space will not permit me to continue in this vein.

The Agra Gharana which Faiyyaz Khan not merely represented but symbolised in his personality was a Dhrupad based gharana having as its base a masculine voice, unusual command over 'swara' and 'raga', dhrupad based laykari, a scientific vistar system, clear and bold tanas with clear beats and combination of rangile bolkari with varying rhythmic phrases. I had asked Khansahab in one of his leisurely moments how he had inherited such a masculine, sonorous and melodious voice. Khansahab patted me and said affectionately 'My son, just as you have 'jawari' in your Sitar or in your Ustad's Bin, we have jawari in our voice. It is the result of the 'bakshis' of Lord Almighty and rigorous riyaz from early years". After that, whenever I heard any Vocalist of repute I always searched for that kind of Jawari and found to my surprise that whatever be the quality of one's voice, it is possible to develop a sonorous and vibrant ring in the voice similar to the Jawari of instruments.

In the musical lineage of Faiyyaz Khan the earlier celebrities were Ghagge Khuda Baksh, Ghulam Abbas, and Abdulla Khan. Ghulam Abbas first trained his brother Kallan Khan and later Nathan Khan ( Son of Sher Khan and father of Ustad Vilayet Husain Khan ). Faiyyaz Khan (who lost his father Safdar Khan in his infancy) was trained up by Ghulam Abbas from the age of seven. Faiyyaz Khan also briefly learnt from Pandit Ganeshilal Choube of Mathura who also taught Hafiz Ali Sarodia. Faiyyaz Khan also learnt from Kallan Khan and from his uncle Mia Husain (his father's gharana was the Secunderabad Rangile gharana ). Faiyyaz Khan was trained also by Mehboob Khan ('Daraspia') of Atruali Gharana and father of Ustad Atta Husain Khan. It is said that in developing Thumri gayaki, apart from the Rangile tradition, Faiyyaz Khan was deeply influenced by the singing of Moujuddin Khan. Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was also influenced to some extent by the style of Alap of the famous Dhrupad singers Alla Bande and Zakirruddin Khan who once stayed with him for a couple of months.

Faiyyaz Khan joined the Baroda Durbar at the call of Sir Sayaji Rao Gaikwad in 1915 when he was about 44 years of age. Khan sahab was born in 1870 and passed away in 1950 at Baroda at the age of 71-72 years. He started performing in concerts from the age of 24-25. In 1925 the Maharaja of Mysore conferred upon him the title "Aftab-e-Mausiqui" or "Sun of Music'. That year he was honoured with "Sangit Churamani" by the Lucknow Music Conference. Then came the title of "Sangit Saroj" from Allahabad. The Baroda Durbar conferred upon him the title of "Gyan Ratna."

The pupils of Khansahab are legion. To name but a few Azmat Husain, Atta Husain, Khadim Husain, Latafat Husain, Dilip Chandra Vedi, Malka Jan of Agra, S. N. Ratanjankar and last but not the least that great young maestro Ustad Sharafat Husain, who prematurely left us in 1985 at the height of his fame. I have personal and vivid recollections of Khansahab's house at Lakkadpitha in Baroda, his visits to Khanderao market for shopping, and a moving incident of Khansahab handing over on the road a ten rupee note in those days to a beggar girl who was singing in a charming voice and Khansahab blessing the girl and regretting that he had no more money to offer the child that morning. Another instance of Khansahab's big heartedness and magnanimity. Close to Khnsahab's house was the only instrument makers shop ( Somabhai Mistri ) in Baroda in a cottage with a small garden in front. I was tuning my Sitar after its repair and playing Miya Ki Todi. Khansahab with his servant was passing by the road and his watchful eyes and ear spotted me with my instrument. Without a word he walked into the shop, smiled at me and asked "what is your Ustad teaching you these days ?" I said Miya Ki Todi and then I played a few phrases and one of them wrongly on purpose. Khansahab was visibly annoyed and told me that my Ustad could not have shown me that phrase. My intention was to get Khansahab's guidance and I politely sought his guidance, and lo and behold, Khansahab sang Miya Ki Todi in his open voice and repeatedly demonstrated the movements. "Ma pa dha ma gare" and "Ni sa re ni dha" in his beautiful voice explaining the connection between Sree Rag and Mia Ki Todi. I shall never forget that incident all my life. The great man then smiled, patted me and went on his way.

Ustad Faiyyaz had the highest sense of loyalty towards His Highness the Maharaja of Baroda. The traditional Ustads of those days were rather strict in selecting their disciples. But there is one vivid instance in the late twenties when the late Pundit Bhatkhande produced a young man in his late teens ( and a 'graduate' in those days ) before the full Durbar of Sir Sayaji Rao Gaikwad. Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was in attendance at the Court and was to perform very shortly. Pundit Bhatkhande politely suggested to the Maharaja that he may he gracious enough to "request" Ustad Faiyyaz Khan to accept the young man as his disciple. The Maharaja Sahab beckoned to Khansahib and whispered something in his ears. Khansahib, however, in token of his loyalty and regard for the Maharaja loudly responded saying if this was the "royal" wish, he would make it his own wish also and take the young man as his disciple. Many readers would be pleasantly surprised to know that this young man was none other than that great musician and musicologist of the Maurice College of Music fame—Pandit S. N. Ratanjankar. The training given by Ustad Faiyyaz Khan helped him to build a fine synthesis between "Gwalior gayaki" and "Agra gayaki" with greater accent on Agra gayaki. Another instance of the Ustad's sense of loyalty to the Royal House of Baroda may be recorded.

After the passing away of Sir Sayaji Rao Gaikwad in 1939, the new ruler and great sportsman Sir Pratapsing Rao Gaikwad took a significant step to bring classical music within the reach of ordinary music lovers. He issued a "firman" that the Court Musicians should "perform for the public at famous Kirti Mandir hall of Baroda on fixed days of the week". I distinctly remember that Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was assigned Sunday evening, Ustad Nisar Husain ( now of Calcutta ) Tuesday evening and Shri Krishna Rao Kolhapure ( Bin player and pupil of Latif Khan Binkar of Indore ) Thursday evening. Ustad Faiyyaz Khan openly welcomed the royal order and regularly perforned every Sunday before a large gathering. It was here that Khansahib used to ask Sharafat Khan, then in his teens, to perform first before Khansahib gave his performance. I had the good fortune of hearing Khansahib every Sunday apart from other concerts elsewhere and at his house.

Inspite of a highly masculine personality and strong exterior, Ustad Faiyyaz was at heart a soft and emotional person. I recall an incident at the All India Music Confererce held at Baroda ( at Nyaya Mandir or High Court hall ) in 1944 to which many musical stalwarts of India had

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been invited. In that conference Pundit Onkar Nath Thakur, had given an excellent performance in 'Deshi Todi and Bhairavi' in his piercing and melodious voice. A partisan group had got a rumour circulated that this time Ustad Faiyyaz Khan—the Lion that he was had been nabbed in his own den. The rumour naturally reached the Ustad's ears. In his concluding programme at the Conference on a Sunday morning, Khansahib briefly addressed the audience thus "There is a proverb that a domesticated hen when cooked tastes like daal but a hen bought from the market tastes like real chicken. This perhaps applies to "local" musicians and "outside" musicians. But my friends, music

Aftab e Mausiqui Ustad Faiyyaz Khan
( Baroda & Agra)

is music and the music of every musician has its own flavour. I shall sing today whatever little I have learnt from my Ustads, and you shall be my judges." So saying, he applied the pancham of the mandra saptak and literally a silence fell upon the hall. Sitting behind to assist him were Ustad Atta Hasain Khan and Ustad Khadim Husain Khan. The Tabla player was none other than the legendary Ustad Ahmed Jan Thirakwa. As Ustad Faiyyaz warmed up, step by step, the Alap in Raga "Ramkali" was built up weaving up patterns of gold in the hearts of listeners and then followed a dhamar and the famous Khayal "Unasanga Lagi". Khansahib ended up with "Babul Mora" in Bhairavi. The crowd went mad and the great Ustad acknowledged their greetings and applause standing up with Thirakwa Khansahib embracing Faiyyaz Khan. This was the most touching and emotional recital I have ever heard of Ustad Faiyyaz Khan.

One more fact of Ustad Faiyyaz Khan's personality. One of his near and constant associates was Ustad Ghulam Rassul Khan, his brother in law by relation. Ghulam Rassul spoke fluent English and Hindusthani. He was also one of the best harmonius players I have seen in my career and an accompanist to Ustad Faiyyaz Khan in all major conferences and concerts. His accompaniment and flourish of tanas can be heard in Ustad Faiyyaz Khan's 3 minutes ( 78 rpm ) record of Nat Behag ( Jhan Jhan Payal Baje ). Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was basically a simple and straightforward person and naturally many people tried to take advantage of this. Ustad Faiyyaz Khan soon found a way out. Whenever any suggestion or proposal of consequence came to him, he would politely suggest that the matter be discussed with Ghulam Rassul Khan as "he was an educated and lettered person". Thus a convention developed and along with it something of a standing joke.

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How great a man he was apart from being a legend in music ! One wonders whether a singer of his personality, depth and charm with a voice of solid gold and unrivalled mastery over rhythm will reappear in our land in the forsseeable future. It is only after centuries of culture of music that such luminaries appear on the musical firmament. That, unfortunately, is a hard fact of our musical tradition.

## CHAPTER-14
## USTAD ALLAUDDIN KHAN

That Ustad Alauddin Khan occupies a very high place of pride in Indian Classical Music is no longer a subject matter of either debate or difference of opinion. In fact Ustad Alauddin Khan belonged to that rare and small group of artists who became a legend in their own life time by the sheer weight of their learning, hard work and ceaseless propagation of music. His was a life of total dedication to classical music and maintaining its pristine glory and grandeur. More important than all this, the late Ustad by his uncompromising devotion to classical tradition succeeded during his life time in building up certain norms in the teaching and presentation of music which, unfortunately, are once again in the melting pot.

Born in a musical family in East Bengal, the great Ustad started off at a very tender age in quest of real music and the amount of hard work and personal privation which he had to go through are perhaps almost without parallel in contemporary musical history. The one distinguishing feature of the late Ustad was that he respected one and all and was always prepared to learn from any one whom he considered to be good enough to be a teacher. In this process of experimentation and learning he went through rigorous training in various Indian instruments, orchestration, English notations and rare compositions. He learnt under many teachers and tried to imbibe the best in them and there is a story that one teacher (Ustad Ahmed Ali Khan of Muktagacha State in East Bengal ) was not agreeable to young Alauddin Khan playing the Jod portion of Alap by secretly listening to the Ustad on the ground that the Ustad did not like this and was not prepared to train him in the playing of Jod. The journey of Alauddin Khan to Rampur and the trials he had to go through before he was accepted as a pupil by Ustad Wazir Khan of Rampur are too well-known to bear repetition. Alauddin Khan was prepared to go to any length to learn music and ultimately after a fairly long period of denial he did get the blessings of Ustad Wazir Khan and became one of the finest Sarod players in the country in addition to being an adept in playing a wide variety of Indian and western instruments in a masterly fashion. He was himself a Court musician in Maihar State in Madhya Pradesh and spent most of his life in Maihar with occasional visits to Calcutta and other parts of India. One important fact of life was his close association with Uday Sankar with whom he went abroad and provided orchestration and musical support to Uday Sankar's Dance Troupe.

Ustad Alauddin Khan had fabulous knowledge of classical music. It is said that he had been able to collect nearly 3000 dhrupads and dhamars from his Ustads, out of which he could without any difficulty demonstrate nearly 1200 compositions. Apart from this he had vast treasures of musical knowledge. He had also numberless compositions in instrumental music and had phenomenal knowledge of the Ragas and Raganis of the Indian classical system. He was also a great master of rhythm and had exceptionally good command not only over the Pakhwaj and tabla but also a wide variety of percussion instruments.

Ustad Alauddin Khan made a very sharp departure and break from the traidtional Ustads and musical masters of the country in the sense that the hardship and the agonies through which he had to pass while learning music infused in him an iron determination to break the monopoly and the secrecy which the earlier Ustads and Maestros used to preserve and hold back musical knowledge from their pupils.

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The practice of earlier Ustads was that they would give proper musical training only to their children or next of kin but would treat pupils in general in a very derogatory and step-fatherly fashion. By this short sighted action the families of traditional musicians used to take pride in the fact that musical knowledge was their sole monopoly and that only the descendents of these families were entitled to learn the secrets of classical Indian music. Ustad Alauddin Khan was perhaps one of the very few masters who tore this custom and practice to pieces. He had almost taken a vow that he would teach all that he knew to any one who came to him and had the eagerness and aptitude to learn music. It is on account of this charitable disposition of the Ustad that classical music has reached the homes of many and has crossed even international frontiers. I personally know of many Ustads belonging to the older tradition who were highly displeased with Alauddin Khan's disposition and did not approve of his open heartedness in the teaching and propagation of music. Ustad Alauddin Khan was not only a pioneer but also a great path finder and he was the last person to be cowed down by threats of social disapproval. He was really a very hard task-master but he had a heart of gold and he was ever willing to teach whatever he knew. He firmly believed that a great musical tradition could never be fostered by following secrecy but only by freely circulating it and sharing it in the widest possible manner with as many learners as possible.

Apart from this basic change in outlook, Ustad Alauddin Khan was also highly receptive to new ideas and was keen to pick up all that he considered to be good in other musical systems. He was the pioneer in Orchestration in Indian music based on his experience in the West. He was a pioneer in developing a new style of rhythmic presentation of music and in also in portraying the grandeur and the immense beauty of nature in musical compositions and presentation. In so far as his performance was concerned Ustad Alauddin Khan was a very great performer no doubt but his presentations used to give the impression of somebody who has gone through very rigorous and almost inhuman musical practice and this is to some extend marred the beauty of his performances. From the point of view, however, of tradition or classical quality, he was the master from beginning to finish. It is said that one of his Ustads once told him that the

Padma Vibhusan Ustad Allaudin Khan ( Maihar ) amount of hard work and patience he had shown would be rewarded in the future generation to be trained by him and this perhaps explains why Ustad Alaudin Khan has been able to produce some of the great musical maestros which this country can be proud of.

One can keep on writing endlessly on the great Ustad. But I would like to conclude with very small personal experience of the great Ustad if only to illustrate his inherent greatness and ability to appreciate and enthuse the learners of music. Way back in 1946 when I was in my teens learning music in the former Princely State of Baroda from late Ustad Abid Hussain Binkar of Jaipur Gharana, Ustad Alauddin Khan who was on a visit to Baroda somehow came to know that a Bengalee Brahmin boy was being trained by a Binkar of great erudition and tradition. He made it a point to visit our house and requested my late father that I should play some music to the great Ustad. I distinctly remember that I played Mia-Ki-todi with Ustad Alauddin Khan sitting just before me along with his pupil Ravi Sankar, then a youngman of twentysix sitting behind him. I played for a full hour after which the great Ustad embraced me and gave his blessings saying that I had been inducted into classical music in the best of traditions and that all that remained was to keep practising and pursuing music to be able to reach greater heights in future. I would respectfully submit that in the present day situation one just cannot visualise a master musician of Ustad Alauddin Khan's stature going out of his way to hear, applaud and encourage a teen-ager still struggling to learn music. This is perhaps the best indication of what sort of a man Ustad Alauddin Khan was and this also explains how he came to occupy an exalted place in Indian classical music besides winning the hearts of millions of people with his music, his training and his fearless support of what he considered to be truly classical.

# CHAPTER 15
# USTAD LATAFAT HUSSAIN KHAN

The passing away of Ustad Latafat Husain Khan at the age of 66 in December 1986 has left a void in the world of classical vocal music in India in general and for the reputed Agra gharana in particular. Times have vastly changed since independence and in some fields, unavoidably perhaps, there has been a break with the earlier tradition. The field of "gharander" musicians, holding aloft and carrying forward the torch of musical learning and excellence, has definitely narrowed down. Ustad Latafat Husain belonged to this field and very much belonged to the tradition of Khandani musicians. Both as a performer and as teacher he had the unmistakable mark of a gharanadar musician. As things stand today, there are very few musicians of this category and with the passing away of such musicians we are left the poorer, with a void that is very difficult to fill.

When we discuss or attempt an appraisal of any musician of this stature and background, we have to start with the musician's personality. As a man, Latafat Khan had a heart of gold a spirit of maganimity and comraderie which, I daresay, comes only to men of his clan. Self effacing and unassuming by nature, he was always willing to give—a very rare quality these days. Even when he shouted at someone, it was just an outward expression of anger but behind all this was his affection. He never carried his grudge and was rather too quick to make up with anyone he had estranged. And his concern for the distressed and the sick was something to be seen to be believed. He appeared more nervous, on such occasions, than the patient or his relatives. What a specimen of humanity he was !

Personally, he was deeply religious, did his 'namaz' regularly and prayed for the welfare of all around him. Now all these noble qualities were very clearly reflected in his music and in his approach to the performance and teaching of music. These qualities, I repeat, are part and parcel of rich gharana traditions of India where music is just not a means of livelihood but a trust, calling for the highest degree of dedication and unflinching sense of loyalty. Such, then, was the milieu from which Latafat Husain and other great musicians were produced. May be they were not educated by modern standards, but their sense of refinement and excellence was unique which one finds in great poets, painters and religious saints.

I had the unique privilege of knowing Latafat from the early forties in Baroda ( when I was born and received my talim in music ) and Bombay ( where I studied for a while ). Latafat Khan was a locale of Bombay and lived with his elder brother Padmabhusan Ustad Khadim Husain Khan. It was from his elder brother that he had his basic talim. Around the early forties, he came to Baroda to stay with Ustad Faiyyaz Khan and receive advanced talim. As a college student and a music enthusiast, I was a regular visitor to Ustad Faiyyaz Khan's house at Lakkadpitha in Baroda. Latafat Khan, then aged 24 or so, had a stockily built appearance with a very robust health. Chewing pan and cracking jokes, he was always in very high spirits. What an unique assembly of musical greats we saw in Ustad Faiyyaz Khan's house. There was the great Ustad Faiyyaz Khan ( a legend in his lifetime ), Ustad Atta Husain Khan ( his brother-in-law ) Ustad Ghulam Rasool ( the great harmonium player ) Ustad Latafat Husain, Ustad Hamid Husain, Ustad Mouzud Husain Khan and last but the least that bright star of Agra gharana Ustad Sharafat Husain ( then a boy in his teens ) who is now no more.

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Apart from these people, there were illustrious visitors like Ustad Vilayat Husain Khan and his son Yunus and also Ustad Azmat Husain Khan.

Anytime in that house was music time. Seldom were the tanpuras silent ; Alap, Dhamars and Khayals in ragas spreading throughout the day could be heard. It looks distant now, but as a teenager I saw Latafat Khan receiving lessons from Ustad Faiyyaz Khan and Atta Husain Khan. In all public concerts those days in Baroda, Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was supported by Atta Husain and Latafat Husain.

Ustad Latafat Hussain Khan
( Bombay & Calcutta )

I remember vividly a concert in 1944 in Sardar Ambegaonkar's house where this trio performed different varieties of

Malhar. These concerts used to come back in our dreams and haunt us for weeks—an ample testimony to the great music of these masters. I have seen Latafat Khan practising Vilambit Khayal with tanpura in his right hand and the 'baya' of the tabla in his left hand.

One concert of Latafat Husain I must refer to. He was singing at the residence of Prof. Saiyad Mujtaba Ali ( the famous Bengali writer ) who was then the Professor of Comparative Religion in our college at Baroda. Prof. Ali, a great friend of my late father, was our close neighbour in Alkapuri, Baroda. Latafat Khan that night chose to start with an alap in Bihag followed by a Sadra in jhaptal and then reeled off about 5 to 6 compositions some of which I still remember. After a coffee break, Latafat gave a marvellous performance in Jaijaivanti. More than once, we were mesmerised into believing that Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was himself singing. Latafat had a sonorous and vibrant voice those days with a wide range. His control over breath was fantastic and the throw of his voice when producing gamak and bol tanas was so masculine and accurate that one felt even the floor and walls of the rooms trembling and echoing his tanas. What a great singer he was, sweating it out but smiling away with a glint in his eyes. The listeners were just overwhelmed. Tape recorders were unknown then, how I wish his music of those days was recorded for the future generations. Latafat Khan, that night rounded off his concert with a brilliant exposition of Khamaj Thumri—"Na manungi" —to the utter delight of the audience.

We may now turn to the music and gayaki or Latafat Khan. Agra gharana has three strains—the old gharana, the second gharana and the Atrauli branch. Latafat was musically a successor to Ustad Faiyyaz Khan who belonged to the second Agra gharana and the Secunderabad Rangila gharana. Like his ustad, Latafat had practically no influence of Atrauli, he was in the mainstream of Agra gharana based on a masculine voice, Dhrupad based Alap, specialisation in Hori Dhamar and a vide variety of Khayals set to various talas in Vilambit, Madhyalaya and Drut compositions. In voice production, he was close to Ustad Faiyyaz Khan—a deep penetrating voice with tremendous control on swar and srutis, a voice which deliberately created broken nuances while singing the 'rangila' phrases. Latafat's Alap was rich and his raga portrayal ( in his middle age ) was sublime. He had inherited Ustad Faiyyaz Khan's raga sense, in particular the refined distancing of the notes. The fall from say Nishad to Pancham in mandra saptak in ragas like Megh or Nayaki Kanada or from pancham to rishab in Chayanat were really a treat to hear. I have heard very many vocalists and Alapi instrumentalists but this excellence was really uncommon. Latafat had also mastered the making of bols, the matching of words, notes and rhythm which make Agra Gayaki a separate genre altogether. Talking of Khayal gayaki, Ustad Faiyyaz Khan had told us that leaving tankari aside, the basic feature of a khayal composition in madhya laya was its melody and rhythmic character taken together. This, he said, was the contribution of the "Kawwal Bachas" khayal gayaki. Saying this Ustad Faiyyaz Khan would burst forth into simple bandishes in teental/ektal without tanpura or tabla and slowly clap at the different points of the tala. It was an unique experience for that is how elementary talim used to be given. Latafat, by virtue of this, was extremely strong in laya and tala in different tempos. His pattern of tanas with clear heavy beats was sharply punctuated to the tala and he could return to any part of the khayal at will after accomplishing really different bols and tanas.

The next feature of Latafat Khan was his "Theheran" or dwelling on a note to create the mood of the ragas. Let us take Jaunpuri, a favourite morning melody of Latafat Khan. His deliberate and long waiting on notes like Dhaivat, Nishad, Gandhara and Rishab created a magic effect in unfolding the essence of the raga he was singing. It is rare these days for artists to take this line of note production. It is really different and has to be learnt the real hardway. Those who try to imitate are easily found out.

Voice production, accurate deliniation of notes, and charming bols and tanas matched by a deep aesthetic sense-these perhaps were Latafat's strong points in Khayal Music. He had a vast store of Hori Dhamars in various ragas and set to medium pace he sang them, very well indeed. I must mention here that having married the daughter of Ustad Vilayat Husain (son of Ustad Nathan Khan the great Dhamar and khayal singer), he had occasion to get some compositions from his father-in-law. I must however, stress that Latafat was, from first to last, a torch bearer of Agra gayaki, as presented and developed by the legendary Ustad Faiyyaz Khan. Having heard a very good cross section of Agra gharana, I am of the view that Latafat Khan was, in his hey days, the closest approximation to Ustad Faiyyaz Khan. To keep him firmly on the rails of Agra gayaki his elder brother and teacher Ustad Khadim Husain was largely responsible.

Latafat Khan was honoured by Sur Sringer Sangha in Bombay and there were other titles bestowed upon him. Strangely enough he did not get the recognition due to him from New Delhi. Perhapes it is our old tradition, in spite of all this hulabula about art promotion and cultural exchanges that we quietly forget the brilliant and aged sons of the soil who toiled all their lives to serve the cause of music.

Around 1978, Latafat Khan joined the Sangeet Research Academy of the I. T. C. at Calcutta as a Master Musician and trained up a few pupils. Latafat Khan was not in real good health now and his voice was losing its grit and quality perhaps due to his asthmatic trouble and climatic reasons. But he was greatly revered and respected. Those who came into contact with him will never forget his warmth of feeling and endearing heart. On hearing the news of the death of Sharafat Khan, he broke down as if someone within him had left him.

The Sangeet Research Academy raised Latafat Husain to the National level again and again through concert appearances in all parts of India. To crown it all, the Academy held a splendid concert in his memory on 28th May, 1987 at Calcutta to raise donations for the benefit of the Ustad's bereaved family—a very noble gesture indeed which is not merely worthy of highest praise but also something to be emulated by others.

One can keep or writing about Latafat's many faceted music but one has to stop somewhere. I shall do so but on a purely personal note and the readers may kindly bear with me. In August 1981 I had played Alap and Jod in Goud Malhar at the Sangit Research Academy in presence of very eminent musicians including Ustad Nisar Husain, Dagar brothers, Umar Khan, V.G. Jog, A.T. Khan, Malavika and Latafat Husain. By the grace of Lord Almightly and blessings of my late Ustad Abid Husain, the music that evening made a deep impact. I do not know how many times after that concert Latafat Khan kept on telling me "Kya Goud Maihar bajaye ho, Ab phir Kab Sunaoge ?" ( what Gour Malhar did you play, when will you play again ? ). Only a musical Kinsman and an artist par excellence could have made such remarks which is uncommon these days. Claps, standing ovations are the accepted modern methods of applause and perhaps a good press write up. But the loud praise of a stalwart is something to be cherished and remembered. And that reminds me of the rigorous musical yardstick Ustad Faiyaz Khan often referred to "A mere gesture of approval and encouragement by a master or really knowledgeable person is worth more than ovation of thousands of people."

Latafat Khan composed music under the pen name of "Premdas", someone who is a servant of eternal love. So he really was both in mind and spririt, a deeply religious person. And so was his fine composition in Bhairavi "Allah meri jholian bhar dijiye" ( Oh Lord, Kindly fill up my bag with your love and blessing ). Such was Latafat Khan, by the light of his own genius.

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## CHAPTER 16
## USTAD SHARAFAT HUSSAIN KHAN

The late Ustad Sharafat Husain Khan who left us prematurely and rather young in 1985 was a musical luminary of extraordinary brilliance. As a student and keen observer of the rise of musicians and the shifting trends in classical music, I can safely vouchsafe that Sharafat Khan had really speaking no equal. In private parlance, we used to refer to him as an uncut piece of diamond shining in his own brilliance and light, like the spectrum of the rainbow colours. In his passing away the Agra Gharana has suffered a void which will be difficult to fill.

When we talk of artists, the first point of relevance is the artists' personality and musical presence. Short statured and well built, Sharafat Khan had an appearance of gold, an appearance of someone who, by some gift of God, used to radiate confidence and joy. He had a smiling face and even when angry his eyes smiled and there was a glint of love and affection in his bright eyes. Simple by habit, he shunned trappings of all sorts even at the height of his fame. He held artists in very high esteem whatever be their standing. He was outspoken without bearing malice towards anyone. While discussing a musical luminary of yester years (let us not name him here) Sharafat Khan was quite loud in his praise but wittily remarked that the artist might have dressed more simply and not carried his "asan" (cloth seat) all over and also condescended to make do with two tanpuras instead of four in the bigger music conferences.

By nature and temperament, he was a traditionalist to the core. There was no facet of Khayal Music over which he had no control and mastery. Gifted with a steady, vibrant cherished and remembered. And that reminds me of the rigorous musical yardstick Ustad Faiyaz Khan often referred to "A mere gesture of approval and encouragement by a master or really knowledgeable person is worth more than ovation of thousands of people."

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By nature and temperament, he was a traditionalist to the core. There was no facet of Khayal Music over which he had no control and mastery. Gifted with a steady, vibrant and sonorous voice, he held sway over Alap, Vilambit and Drut Khayals, a vast collection of Dhrupads and Hori Dhamars besides a rare collection of Thumris of various schools, and vide variety of ghazals, folk songs and Bhajans. I can say without any fear of contradiction that his collection and musical repertoire were clearly reminiscent of his senior and ustad-that great legendary figure Ustad Fayyaz Khan.

Like the stalwarts of Agra Gharana his voice reproduction was very rich and showed extraordinary colour, shades and resilience particularly after the first half an hour of his singing. A voice which lent itself to a large variety of moods—the veer rasa, karun rasa. Sensous and virile by turns the tremendous thrust of his pukar make him unforgetable. His versatility was unique in the sense that the raga he was singing was presented at its best. Jokingly he used to tell us that raw notes of a raga meant nothing so long as the performer could not bring them up properly and infuse in them life and create the mood of the raga. He maintained that simpler ragas were more difficult to perform than difficult or "achhop" ragas, the reason being that even the lay listeners would know some of the nuances and phrases of these ragas. He held that not all performers and not all listeners are suited for the difficult and complex ragas.

Once in a concert he smilingly said that if you want to show the quality of your heart, come out with something everyone understands. And then with a frown he said that if you want to give an exhibition of your virtuosity, by all means pick up some outlandish raga or better still present some familiar raga in an "unfamiliar" light ! He lamented often that music must be easy to understand and enjoy instead of becoming a cause for tension, anxiety and even agony ! Once he told me that they are types and types of musicians and that it would be unwise to take any artist for granted until you had heard him out at least twice or thrice.

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He intensely hated gimmicks and artificiality and felt that good music had immense charm of its own and only the queer people had the need of being "grotesque'.

I had the pleasure and privilege of knowing Sharafat Khan from his childhood days. We met in the early forties (when both of us were teenagers) at Baroda, the place where I was brought up and learnt my music. Sharafat Khan was about 12/13 years of age when he left Atrauli and came to Baroda to live with Ustad Fayyaz Khan. As a regular visitor to the Ustad's house in Lakkadpitha at Baroda I saw Sharafat learning music and sweating it out the hard way. His voice was then preadolescent but swiftness of his tans was

Ustad Sharafat Husain Khan

Ustad Padmasri Sharafat Husain Khan
( Atrauli & Calcutta )

fantastic. In fact at the age of 10 or 11 years his first 3 minute gramophone record (Multani and Behag) had come out. I remember Ustad Faiyyaz Khan restraining the musically "wild" boy working out permutations and combinations of tanas. The ustad advised him to calm down as he had to learn many subtleties of swar and raga. One Winter night the Ustad nad tucked young Sharafat away" into his razai or blanket and was giving him lessons in "swar control." Often the Ustad would ask Sharafat to sing first and then sing the same song himself and ask Sharafat to follow him.

In the mid forties Ustad Faiyyaz Khan would sing to the public at Kirti Mandir Hall, Baroda every Sunday evening. Before the Ustad started, it was a ritual that Sharafat would sing for half an hour or so. I distinctly remember how the Ustad's gayaki gradually came into the life and voice of Sharafat Khan. On holidays, ( those were leisurely days ), Sharafat and I gossiped and on occasions played marbles on the verandah of Khansahab's house. Sharafat used to wear kurta and pyjamas but on the Sunday concert at Kirti-mandir he came dressed in Chust pyjama a green silk kurta and sometimes a sherwani to top it all.

We parted company around 1947 or so when Sharafat returned to Aligarh and Atrauli in U. P. I entered the Indian Administrative Service in 1953 and spent one year in training at Delhi. Here I met Sharafat off and on and also attended some of his concerts. These were the real formative years for Sharafat when his voice and gayaki were assuming a distinct individuality under the pressure of rigorous practice and talim. The unique feature of Sharafat's gayaki is that he imbibed the best of two strains of Agra gayaki—the style of Agra and the style of Atrauli or the style of Ghulam Abbas, Tassaduk Husain, Faiyyaz, and the style of Daras Piya (Mehboobkhan), Ata Husain's father. By marriage, Sharafat also came under the influence of Vilayat Husain Khan, son of Nathan Khan, the great Dhamar and Khayal Singer

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Sharafat's remarkable achievement was the synthesis he brought about in integrating these styles into one composite gayaki which was distinctly his own. I have had the privilege of extensively listening to Ustad Fayaz Khan, Ustad Vilayat Husain Khan, Ustad Khadim Husain, Ustad Ata Husain, Ustad Azmat Husain, Ustad Asad Ali Khan, Ustad Latafat Husain and others. What Sharafat Husain gifted to India was the best possible synthesis of the style of these musical giants. I have neard Sharafat casually reeling off very difficult bandishes of Ustad Alladiya Khan in obscure ragas like Kedar Nat, Hem Nat, Raisa Kanada, Lalit Pancham, which really were compositions of the Atrauli gharana to which Alladia Khan belonged (as a Dhrupadia) before migrating to Jaipur.

It was in the late fifties that Sharafat shifted to Calcutta and stayed with Ata Husain Khan in the Mahisadal palace on Wellesley Street. He learnt many bandishes from Ata Husain who, we all know, was a veritable storehouse of compositions. Sharafat stayed on in Calcutta perhaps till the mid sixties and then shifted to his ancestral environs in Aligarh and Atrauli. I am not quite sure why he left Calcutta which is known as a great seat of music. Perhaps, he was being overtaken by a sense of frustration which comes to many who stay long enough as 'locales' in any place. Privately he told me that he had a 'long way' to go and that 'riyaz' in the peaceful environs of smaller towns could be done better and so on and so forth. It is from Aligarh/ Atrauli in the late sixties that Sharafat really rose to fame and was spontaneously called up from all parts of India. It was from here that he performed regularly from All India Radio, Delhi and appeared in a series of

National programes and Sangit Samellans of All India Radio.

All India recognition had now come and Sharafat received the Padmasri Award from the President of India. I kept on meeting him off and on. When in Calcutta, he now came as a visitor and would stay with his disciple Purnima Sen. One evening he hummed a few phrases and tanas in Hem Kalyan and we were taken by storm at his brilliance and the bright tonal quality of his voice. Khansahib's voice had acquired a golden quality, that 'Jawari' in his voice which, as Ustad Faiyyaz Khan had told me, came after long years of riayaz, talim and 'Khudaki bakshish'.

I would like to share a thought here with the reader. What I say here is no gossip nor any tale. It is something which devoted musicians have felt when coming in touch with musical stalwarts and masters. There was something in the appearance, mannerisms, speech and music of Sharafat at this point that one could feel a strange light or glow radiating from his personality. I knew that he had reached the stage of 'musical enlightenment'. 'This hallow or heightened spirit is also to be found in eminent men in other fields also, be it religion, philosophy, poetry, literature or any other field of human excellence'.

And yet Sharafat appeared totally unaffected. He stopped humming and pestered me when I would play some Sitar to him. I asked Khansahib if he was joking. For once he became serious and said you are an intelligent artist and though not a professional your music has the touch of the gharana to which you belong and our gharana and tantrakari can bring out subtleties and nuances even more suggestively than the voice. I was amazed at Khansahib's modesty and total lack of conceit for a musician of his stature and eminence. Khansahib persisted and said that 'we shall hear you if not now, sometime later if not in person but certainly from a distance.' How incisive he was. But that day never came in my life for Khansahab was taken ill with a fatal disease. With great courage and fortitude did he bear up his illness. In his passing away, a great light has gone out. What remains is his recorded music which must be preserved and protected and projected to the avid listeners in special listening sessions. Every raga, every composition, every phrase and tan has the touch of Sharafat's magic. Let us live with his music as he himself lived in his music unto the last. Before his passing away, the Sangit Natak Akademi award was presented to him at a special investiture cememony in Delhi. Looking back down memory's lane, Sharafat admittedly gave the world much more than he got back in the shape of reward or recognition. That, in fact, is the great tradition of our art and artists. They can be seen, appreciated and respected but never fathomed beyond into their real depths. This has given them immortality as it done to Sharafat Husain Khan.

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# CHAPTER 17
# MUSICAL ANECDOTES BY THE FIRESIDE

Classical music has not only been a culture but a way of life. Around it has grown customs, a cult of respect, refinements in language and courtesies, lot of humour and also inter gharana acrimony and rivalries. All these are part and parcel of the culture and ethos of music and whoever has pursued and learnt music in the company of musicians and art lovers would never miss the anecdotes and the wit with associated with them. I cannot readily recall the very many anecdotes I have come accross but can present just a short cross section of some of them which have occured to me at the spur of the moment.

**Anecdote (1).**

Ustad Bande Ali Khan once practised the Bin for eighteen long years in the "Darga" of a Muslim Saint. His riyaz extending to 14/15 hours a day, however left the resident Pir (Saint) cold and unconcerned. One cold night during the 18th year when the Binkar was playing Bin the Peer Sahib opened his eyes full of tears and in a tone replete with scorn and affection shouted at the great Binkar saying thus "no more toil was necessary now since, Allah had conferred his bakshish on him, let him go now out into the world and whenever or wherever he played the Bin Allah shall be with him and show him the light".

The morale "of the story is simply that through sheer devoted riyaz and dedication Ustad Bande Ali Khan had attained a state of "Musical enlightenment." Legend has it that the great Ustad had devoloped such capabilities that he could play with human emotions at his choice.

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**Anecdote (2).**

Ustad Abbas Khan Binkar, child prodigy, of Jaipur gharana who left for his eternal abode at the age of just 24 years was a fabulous Bin player. Once in a concert at Baroda Durbar he had played Malkosh on the Rudra Bin for full two hours. After him were listed Ustad Faiyyaz Khan and Surasri Kesar Bai Kerkar. The story goes that after the Bin recital, both Ustad Faiyyaz Khan and Kesarbai said they felt overwhelmed and wanted the haunting impression of the Bin prevail and regretted that they be excused from performing that night. Such was the greatness and magna-

Ustad Bundu Khan ( Delhi / Karachi )
Sarangi Wizard

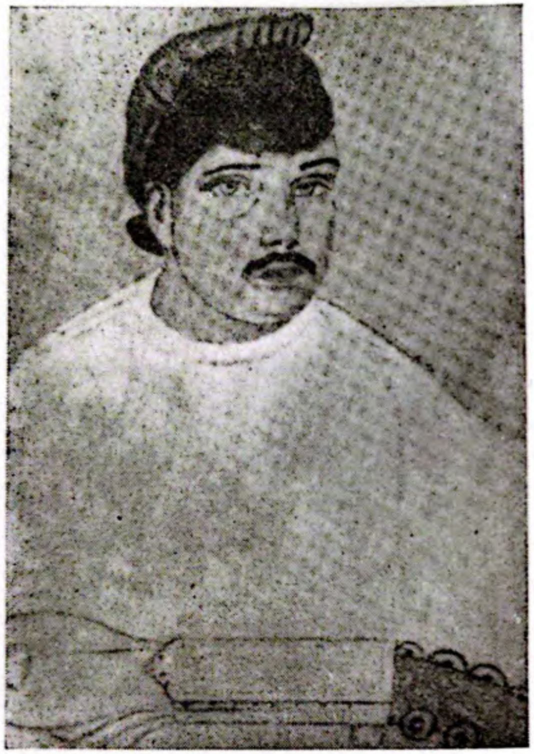
nimity of the maestros of those days. This is a story personally related to me by none other than the Agra gharana maestro Ustad Atta Husain Khan of Baroda and later of Calcutta.

**Anecdote No. 3.**

Ustad Pyare Khan Binkar and descendent from Mian Tansen's daughter's side ( early part of the 19th Century ) was being escorted in a royal palanquin from one Durbar to another Durbar. One evening they camped in the outskirts of a village somewhere in Uttar Pradesh. As usual the great maestro was getting ready for his night's riyaz and was softly tuning the Rudra Bin. He found himself very happily diverted by a melodious rustic song of a vilage lady, strains of which came to the Ustad's ears not from very far. The Ustad laid his Bin to rest and with a small lamp walked in the direction from which the music was coming unescorted by any attendent. Stealthily he reached the doorstep of a small hut where an young mother was singing a lullaby to put her infant child to sleep. The Ustad was overwhelmed by the tune and the melody and tears rolled down his eyes. In silence he stood listening to the song and trying to imbibe the notes occuring in the song. Quietly the Ustad slipped back to his camp and did not do his daily riyaz. He could not, however, sleep as the melody he found in the lullaby continued to haunt him. Well past midnight the Ustad sat with the Bin and reproduced the lullaby trying to recapture its mood and

Ustad Bairam Khan Dhrupadia
( Udaipur )

Ustad Mushtaq Husain Khan (Kampur/Sahaswan) spirit. He toiled until dawn and the result of his toil and deep anguish was the raga Tilak Kamad which was a gift he left for posterity! What an artist and what a sense of humility and devotion! To his dying day the Ustad used to thank the almighty Allah for having give him the opportunity of listening to the tuneful song of the village woman whose musical intergity, he felt, was absolutely unsurpassed.



Ustad Bahadur Sen
(Senia/Sursringhar Player of Rampur)

The moral of this anecdote is two fold—One certainly is the devotion and humility of the greatest of musicians, the second is the great dependence of classical music on folk music and folk lore.

**Anecdote No. 4**

Ustad Faiyyaz Khan was once a guest performer in the Kashmir Durbar when the ruler was Maharaja Hari Singh. By a coincidence, Pundit Bhatkhande was also then in Kashmir. Ustad Faiyyaz Khan performed the first night to thunderous applause. The same tumultous applause continued in the Durbar night after night for ten nights. The Maharaja, himself well versed in music, had so far refrained from asking the Ustad which ragas he had sung for ten nights. Diplomatically he beckoned Pundit Bhatkhande, a great scholar and musicologist, to throw light upon the subject. Panditji was also at a loss. Then the Maharaja pointedly asked Ustad Faiyyaz Khan to indicate the name of the ragas he had sung because Pundit Bhatkhande had been able to fathom only that the Ustad was presenting different varieties of the Kalyan group of ragas. Ustad Sahab smiled softly and replied "Huzur, I have been singing Yaman Kalyan in different styles all these days". The whole Durbar burst into laughter. Such was the talim and presentation capabilities of great maestros of yester years!

**Anecdote No. 5.**

Ustad Mussaraff Khan Binkar of Jaipur was one of the greatest Rudra Bin players of the 19th Century. His virtuosity and playing were fabulous. And perhaps some measure of this success had gone to his head. But music being a vast ocean, no one has ever been able to say the last word on it through either performance or Knowledge.

Sometime quite late in his career, word had reached him that Ustad Bahadur Sen of the Rampur Senia gharana was an unparalleled master of melody and musical notes. The Ustad was keen to probe into the matter. One fine morning with his Bin he landed up at Bahadur Sen's house in Rampur and expressed his wish that he be inducted into the inner mysteries of 'Swar' and raga alap. Bahadur Sen, then past 70 years of age, smiled and said "Beta you are the Badshah of the Rudra Bin and what can I play or sing to you. Besides, I am old and out of riyaz. It would be better if you play me some good Raga Alap". Musaraff Khan was adamant and threatened to go on fast if Bahadur Sen did not accede to his request !

Out of sheer compassion, Bahadur Sen had his Sursringar brought out and himself tuned it. He told Musaraff Khan that he would only play the notes of raga Bhairon in very slow progression and asked him to listen attentively.

Musaraff Khan, who used to write his daily dairy, himself recorded that as. Bahadur Sen started with the ascending notes, he saw in his mind a palace maiden lighting brilliant candles on the terrace of the palace, each candle burning with great intensity ( "Chirag" as he stated in his dairy ) and the great Binkar literally fell into a trance. When he came to his own, he wept loudly and fell prostrate at the feet of Bahadur Sen saying that all his toil and talim had been in vain as he had never heard notes being presented in such catholic chastity. Bahadur Sen blessed him saying that Allah had now given him the power to understand the real message of musical notes.

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**Anecdote No. 6.**

Two Hindu Singers had reached great heights of excellence in early 19th Century in Rajputana. They were invited to perform before the Maharaja of Jaipur. They sang so well that the Maharaja rewarded them with a jagir consisting of a few village. The singers gratefully accepted the reward and the next day reached the jagir headquarters. Not knowing how to establish their proprietory rights over the villages, both the brothers took off their "Safas" or Turbans and securely tied them to the village well and returned to Jaipur. Some days later the Maharaja again asked them to sing in his court. On this occasion the two brothers put up such a sorrowful appearance that the Maharaja wanted to know the reason before they started singing. The brothers with tears in their eyes reported that the jagir given to them had been stolen and taken away. After much questioning, the brothers said that when they revisited the jagir they saw that their 'Safas' (Turbans) tied on to the wells as symbol of their possession had been stolen by some people. The whole Court burst into laughter at this.

Ustad Bande Ali Khan Binkar
(Alwar/Indore)

The morale of the anecdote is that inspite of their excellence in music, the artists were basically simpletons.

### Anecdote No, 7.

The name of the Amrit Sen has gone down in history as one of the greatest Sitar players. A Bengali gentleman had gone all the way from Calcutta to learn Sitar from the great Master. He spent several years learning and listening to the Ustad. One night when Amrit Sen was performing in a concert and had reached great heights of emotion and mastery, the Bengali gentleman stood up and loudly asked all present "Shall I never be able to play Sitar like this ?" He kept on repeating the question and could not be stopped. He was taken away from the concert hall and he turned mad the next day. Amrit Senji was touched deeply by this episode and it is said that he stopped teaching anyone for well over two years after this incident. Such was the sublime art of those masters !

Ustad Babu Khan Binkar
(Indore—Pupil of Bande Ali Khan )

### Anecdote No. 8

"Sur-ka-lagav" by Ustad Nasiruddin Khan was something to be heard to be believed. My late father was a witness to an incident in the Ustad's house in Indore. One early morning two emmissaries of a large princely state visited the Ustad's house and asked to see the Ustad who had retired only a few hours before on completing his riyaz. After lot of coaxing the Ustad came out and the visitors beseeched that they were pining to hear the Ustad's voice and report to their Maharaja about the Ustad's wonderful voice and singing. The Ustad was slightly taken a back but relented. Four tanpuras were standing upright in the music room. The Ustad applied the "Sa" note and lo and behold, the tanpura strings started resonating. Everyone present was startled and fell at the Ustad's feet. This shows to what level of precision, riyaz and sadhana of Nada Brahma can take an artist.

### Anecdote No. 9.

The ruler of Alwar in Rajasthan was a great musician and had learnt the Sitar and Surbahar very well. Once Ustad Bande Ali Khan Binkar visited his Court and the Maharaja proud of his learning, told the Ustad that he would like him to hear his playing of the Rudra Bin. The Ustad encouraged him and the ruler played the Bin for over an hour and thought that he had impressed the Ustad and asked for his coments. The Ustad, outspoken as he was by habit, just remarked that he had heard reasonably good sitar and Surbahar on the RudraBin.

The moral of the anecdote is that Bin requires a specific and different talim compared to other instruments.

### Ancedote No. 10.

Once Ustad Mushtaq Husain Khan was singing in a concert at Lucknow and the fabulous Ustad Bundu Khan was on the Sarangi. It was monsoon and the Ustad was reeling off rare Bandishes in different varieties of malhar. When rendering a drut Khayal in "Charju-Ki-Malhar", the Ustad sang the Asthai portion brilliantly and kept on wandering. Ustad Bundu Khan saw that the singer was unable to render the Antara. Without embarassing the singer, Ustad Bundu Khan started playing the first movements of the Antara, and repeating it. Greatfully Mushtaq Husain looked at him and came out with the Antara in full bloom and then touched the feet of the Ustad Bundu in reverence and gratitude. Can we imagine an accompanist today to rise to these heights or the singer to publicly acknowledge the greatness of the accompanist ?

### Anecdote No. 11

Ustad Babu Khan Binkar of Indore, a brilliant disciple of the legendary Ustad Bande Ali Khan, was by nature an outspoken person. Once in a concert at the Indore palace where some landed aristocracy were present along with members of the royal family, Babu Khan tuned up the Bin but would not play. After some time one of the listeners asked the Ustad to start the recital. The Ustad smiled at the listeners and said that if the listeners who were present chose to hang themselves up in chair and sofas like "langurs (monkeys) on the branches of trees", he would not start his music. The hint went home and all of them took their seats on the Carpet and the exalted music began.

The morale is that listener's must follow the true 'tehzib' or culture of listening and show the musician and the instrument proper respect.

### Anecdote No. 12

In the older days, musicians used to exchange lot of pleasantries and cracked jokes at each other's cost. At the house of Ustad Rajab Ali Khan Binkar of Jaipur, regular

majlis of Ustads used to be held. In one such majlis great masters like Behram Khan Dhrupdia, Ghagle Khuda Baksh, Amrit Sen, Khariat Ali Dhrupadia and Mubarak Ali the great khayal singer were present. Behram Khan commented that while the Khayal was an effiminate style, Dhrupad and Alap were truly masculine and bold. At this Mubarak Ali took offence and retorted by saying that khayal singing was not just what Behram Khan had tried to suggest. He asked Behram to control his tongue. So saying he broke forth in a vigorious and complex tana which brought the house down along with the large cot on which all the Ustad's were seated. With laughter all around and with some difficulty the Ustads extricated themselves and came out. This event was remembered for a long time.

### Ancedote No. 13

In the court of Maharaja Sawai Mansing of Jaipur many musicians had gathered and the atmosphere was one of merriment and hilarity. Behram Khan mentioned to the Maharaja that once in the court of Allah when musical learning (ilam) was being distributed he alone was present and that is why he had all the learning as the other musicians were absent from Allahs Court. Amirbaksh (Dhrupad singer of Nauhar Bani) promptly told the Maharaja that Allah had held another court where the gift of producing musical effects (Asar) touching the human heart was being distributed and there all except Behram Khan were present. That, he claimed, explained why Behram Khans music was lacking in 'Asar' i. e it was just virtuosity and not soulful music. The assembly burst into laughter and Behram Khan found it wise to keep quiet.

### Anecdote No. 14

In Maharaja Man Sing's Court at Jaipur, once a singer from Punjab was asked to sing. The artist sang and sang but he was not correct either in producing the notes, or bringing out the raga, or maintaining the rhythm. After an hours harassed listening the music was stopped. The Maharaja ordered the cashier that the artist should be paid Rs 500/- and 5 paisa and should be told that Rs. 500/- were for the artists good dress and appearance, and 5 paisa for his music ! Legend has it that the artist returned Rs. 500/- and several years later appeared before the maharaja once again and sang so well that the Maharaja was full of praise for the music and he rewarded him handsomely.

**Anecdote No 15.**

Badshah Taimur Leng arranged a festival but no singer could be found. At last a blind singer was traced and brought to the festival. The Badshah asked for the singer's name and the singer replied "Daulat Khan" ( meaning someone very rich and prosperous). The Badshah jokingly remarked. "How come that wealth can also be blind ?" The singer promptly replied "This is exactly why a blind man had come to a lame person", (The Badshah was a lame person). The Badshah appreciated the singers sense of wit.

There is no end to musical anecdotes of almost a bewildering variety. Only a few have been cited here to bring out the values of the musical culture we have inherited and the great respect, freedom and amity which existed in the world of classical music.

## Section E

## The Sitar—Its evolution, gharanas its future

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# CHAPTER 18
# THE SITAR, ITS EVOLUTION, GHARANAS AND FUTURE TRENDS

Elsewhere in this book an essay on gharanas in general has been attempted in which various aspects of gharana music have been discussed and some inferences drawn. Here we shall refer to the Sitar as on instrument of classical music and the gharanas in the 'baaz' of Sitar that have sprung up in recent centuries.

The emergence and rise of Sitar as one of finest instrumental expressions of Raga music, its nuances and rhythmic development constitute a really fascinating story. No particular person, not even Amir Khusro as the legend goes, invented the Sitar. The instrument is the clear result of a systematic process of evolution in which may master performers and thinkers have lent a hand. Historically, all Indian instruments using strings were called Vinas of different types, the Vina being a generic name for them. Amongst them was the Tritantri Vina an instrument with three strings and frets. How it was tuned is not very clearly known but by the 11th or 12th century it had emerged as a instrument for accompaniment to vocal music and later also as an independent concert instrument. A little later, there were a series of Muslim invasions on North India and the Gangetic plains. The invaders mostly Persians and Turks were not only brave warriers but also loved finer things of life like music. Some of them had brought along with them a small instrument with three strings called "Seh-taar" meaning three strings. The visitors were greatly impressed by the Tritantric Vina as were the Indian performers by the Sehtaar. Then started a process of integration, understanding and assimilation which is typical to the resilience and adaptation potentialities of Indian Culture. The emergence of the Sitar was surely a part of this process and no historical date can be mentioned of its invention. Sitar also demonstrated the inherently secular character of our culture and art. By about the 18th Century the Sitar had come to acquire five strings. By stages, the number increased to 7 and from the Sitar later emerged the grand Sur Bahar an instrument used for Raga Alap only.

As in case of vocal music gharanas, the sitar gharanas also, over the centuries, developed their own features. These may listed as—

(i) The tonal quality of the instrument.

(ii) The Technique of using the Mizrabs (plectrum).

(iii) The style and tone of the meeds or graces.

(iv) The style of Raga Alap and treatment of the ragas.

(iv) The nature and structure of compositions in the Vilambit, Madhya and Drut laya.

(vi) The pattern of Upaj, Todas and Tanas and the balancing or rapport with the drummer (tabla).

Apart from these, there were characteristics relating to specialisation in certain ragas, forms of Alap or Gatkari from gharana to gharana.

What were the sources of the Sitar gharanas? The sources most clearly were the Dhrupad composition, Raga Alap of the voice and the Raga Alap particularly of the Rudra Bin. All these cast a magic spell over the Sitar players down the centuries. The most powerful influence over Sitar has been Khayal music and the Tarana songs. Historically all the earlier master exponents of Sitar had learnt music from the Binkars and Dhrupad singers. The music of latter is inscribed very deep into Sitar music. Whatever be the claims lately made of Sitar having its own independent baaz and personality, its dependence upon Bin and Dhrupad has been intense and can be discerned even today in the playing of the Sitar maestros.

In fact in evolving "gatkari" where the Sitar has stolen march even over the venerated Rudra Bin, the reliance has once again been on Dhrupad songs and the Laykari of the Rudra Bin. The Sitar until the thirties of this century clearly had: Vilambit Alap, Madh Alap, Jod Alap, Thok Jhala followed by the gat compositions.

A Sitar of Jaipur gharana

The old Sitar Baaz was based on slow movements of Alap and gat intermixed with enjoyable note combinations produced by the Mizrab of the right hand. It was the Jaipur gharana of Sitar which produced "Do hath ka Baaz"—that judicious blending of the playing of both the right hand using special bols of Mizrab and the left hand playing notes on the frets with graces, gamakas and tanas. The Sitar also come to develop special 'bols' of the mizrab which were different from gharana to gharana and this helped to develop the technical aspects of Sitar which became typical to Sitar giving it a distinct and separate identity as an instrument.

Ustad Shamsuddin Khan Sitaria
(Jaipur and Bombay)

The impact of khayal on Sitar has been very great indeed. And it is this, perhaps, which can explain the very quick metamorphosis of the old traditional baaz in the last 70/80 years or so with the more recent trends of khayal music. In one word, the emphasis gradually shifted from the right hand to the left hand making possible rendering of swift passages, phrases, tanas and adding to melodic beauty of Sitar playing in practically all the departments.

This brings us to a rather controversial subject namely the playing of the "Gayaki Ang" on Sitar and claims made by several masters as having introduced this in Sitar playing. One basic point that seems to have been missed is that the source of all instrumental music including the Bin is the human voice as expressed in gayaki. Every instrmement, of course, has developed its technique and specialities. But does not every instrumentalist play what he is singing within himself? How can one really differentiate, segregate or divorce gayaki from the music played on instruments? That is why every Binkar had to be a reasonably good singer of Dhrupad and Alap, that is why the good Sitar players have to have a sound training in vocal music. If this gayaki has always existed in instrumental music why give it a new caption? The truth perhaps appears to be that Sitar is tending to become all gayaki, a replication of all that the voice does. No doubt this opens up new vistas of innovation. But what about the Sitar's own distinctive baaz? And so the golden via media lies in judiciously combining gayaki with tantrakari in the playing of Sitar. What we now see today is a great fascination for the complex, tanas of the voice being replicated on the Sitar and almost an obsession with speed and tayyari. Must a musician turn into a machine or remain human with an urge for melody and the sublime? After a point, every innovation however captivating turns out to be counter productive. And once again we have to get drawn back into the basics and melody which emerged from the womb of musical creation.

Any discussion on the evolution of Sitar music will remain incomplete with out a reference to the part which

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rhythm and tabla accompaniment has been playing during the last 40 or 50 years. As stated above the old baaz of Sitar based on the mizrab has been completly changed and the powerful impact of Khayal has induced rapid rhythmic patterns, harmonical tanas, rapid movement from octave to octave, use of tehais etc. The Sitar baaz has come largely to the left hand. The Khayal has brought great refinement in Masitkhani baaz following Khayal vistar, laykari and later fast tanas. The tabla player is no longer a mere accompanist keeping the beats of rhythm as a passive partner. Today the start of Masitkhani gat is heralded by a long drawn "Salami" by the tabla player when the Sitar player just keeps on repeating the gat and then comes a thunderous tahai on the Tabla landing on the 'Sam' and often the crowd, conditioned to this new feature, bursts into applause depending on the status of the players. Then follows vistar, alternated by tanas of many patterns, interspersed with surprises, stuccato notes etc. When the Sitar player returns to the gat, the tabla player again springs back into rela or tukdas and in the process tries to reply to the Sitar players tanas. This goes on and finally comes the drut gat when the players break off into frequent spin offs, sowal jawab etc. A little later the chikari tempo or Jhala is raised to often hair raising speed to the thunderous cheers of the crowd many of whom have been eagerly waiting for this exciting part of the programme. Many listeners outwardly condemn this riot of notes and sounds but secretly have a great longing and liking for it. The author in his long career of 40 to 45 years as a performer has watched audience responses and what is being said here is the literal and hard truth. Very few indeed are concerned about melody, sublime features of our music. There is loud applause for this jugglery and feast of sheer sounds and the press also joins in this applause. The hint is clear enough—those who do not or cannot countenance all this may as well leave, for todays jet music and its exciting pleasures will not be the poorer without them. Turning once again to the finale of the Sitar concert, exciting and crowd catching acrobatics follow. At top speed, Sitar player gives up the jhala and starts rhythmic patterns of notes at one fourth the original speed. Every

Ustad Rahim Sen Sitaria
( Jaipur/Direct descendant of Masit Khan and Tansen )

movement is answered by the Tabla player and so the game goes on and suddenly there is madenning return to the pinnacle of speed when the ragas, the notes the tala beats are already under serious jeopardy. Then comes the finale with furious passages and repetitive tehais at the end of which the recital ends. Sometimes the Sitar player manages to regain his composure and plays one or two familiar phrases to remind the audience of the raga or the melody which was being played so long. Now comes the scene of crashing applause, shouts of 'encore', the artists on their feet bowing to the audience over and over again, photo cameras clicking and someone from the organisers managing bring to down the curtain.

Pandit Bhagaban Das
Sitariya ( Dacca )

So this, dear readers, is where we have now come with Sitar music characterised by the restless features of the jet way of life. Only one point may be made here and that is that for every hour of playing gat, the Sitar player need play for 35 minutes only, while the remaining 25 minutes "rightfully" belong to the Tabla player. The total music provides certainly lot more of fun and merriment and is therefore understandably popular with present day crowds.

The other two significant developments which merit mention are (i) Continuing interaction and interdependence between the playing style of all plucked instruments, the three most prominent being Sitar, Sarod and Guitar and to some extent Mandolin. Instruments are coming to acquire a common baaz. Really speaking, one hears the same Alap, jod, jhala and gats on the Sitar, Sarod, Guitar and there appears to have emerged a standardised instrumental playing style. (ii) The interaction between different Sitar and other instrumental gharanas is quite visible and here too one witnesses a more or less common style and technique of play emerging. There are a few stylised differences only and some differences in tonal qualities. All else seems to have become standardised.

Strictly speaking, talking of Sitar gharanas today might seem to be of largely academic or historical interest. The gharanas still are important and have relevance because all the changes and innovations being attempted today are ultimately rooted in the methods and styles developed by gharana exponents of yesteryears.

We have so long discussed the general trends and some of the common features which now characterise the playing of Sitar by different players who claim to belong to different gharana traditions. We shall now turn to a descriptive analysis of some of the major gharanas of sitar which have emerged during the last 250 years or so. For the sake of convenience we may go senioritywise of the gharanas—

1. **The Jaipur gharana**—is obviously the doyen and practically the mother gharana from which practically all

the Sitar gharanas have taken something or the other. The Jaipur gharana was developed by Masit Khan or Masit Sen of the Senia dynasty who was tenth direct descendent of Miyan Tansen from the side of Bilas Khan. This is repeat not repeat not the dynasty from Tansen's daughter's side who have almost managed to establish their claims of being the real Senias. Masit Khan was a Dhrupadia and had a fair knowledge of Rudra Bin. He was the founder of the Masitkhani style of Sitar. This is not to be confused with Masitkhani or slow gatkari of Sitar. The Masit Khani Baaz included Vilambit Alap, Madh Alap, Jod Alap, Thok Jhala Chikari, the slow and faster gats or composition's. There is another misapprehension which must be cleared up once and for all. Some of today's exponents have circulated the view, that the Jaipur Sitar had no chikari strings. This is a total falsehood. The author has inherited a sitar of Jaipur gharana which should be over 125 years old. This Sitar has chikari, full range of tarabs (sympathetic strings) and also Kharach/Pancham strings. This also gives a lie to the propaganda spread by another group of players that the Jaipur Sitar players did not know or play Alap in kharch/pancham strings. The 125 year old Sitar to which reference has been made above travelled to Europe once in 1894 with Ustad Shamsuddin Khan when he performed at Rome, London and Paris and a second time with the author's father Amulya Chandra Mukherjee to Paris 1932-34.

Coming back to the Jaipur Gharana, Masit khan was followed by great Sitar players like Rahim Sen, Amrit Sen, Dulha Khan, Amir khan, Barkatullah khan, the latter having taught Ashiq Ali khan (father of Ustad Mustaq Ali khan the seniormost last exponent of the Senai Baaz). The other players were Hafiz khan, Haider Husain Khan and Muhmad Bux. The Jaipur gharana followed the Bin and Dhrupad in its Alap technique and also in its gatkari. The first Masitkhani gats emerged from Dhrupads in the form of Sadras set to Jhaptal a tala set to ten beats. From this developed the famous Masitkhani gats in teental of 16 beats. The Masitkhani gat in slightly faster tempo opened the way first for Ferozkhani gats and finally the faster gats in Rezakhani style with profuse use of the Mizrab. Both Ferozkhan and Ghulam Raza were Sitar players of other gharanas but whose inspiration clearly came from the Jaipur style of Sitar playing.

(2) Next in importance comes the **Varanasi Gharana.** This is a very old gharana of both Vocal music and instrumental music covering Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumris and major instruments like Rudra Bin. Surbahar, Sitar, Tabla and Shahnai in which it has given the country some of the finest performers. On the Sitar side, it branched out from the gharana of the famous Prasidhu and Monohar (singers) who were brought up and trained in Varanasi, then migrated to Nepal and again came back to Varanasi. At Nepal Durbar, they were colleagues of the great Wasat Khan Dhrupadia of the Senia dynasty. Prasidhu/Manohar and their descendents received detailed training in Rudra Bin and Surbahar from descendents of Naubat Khan son in law of Miyan Tansan. Thus their Sitar baaz also acquired a powerful Dhrupad and Rudra Bin base. In that tradition came Pundit Pashupati Missir the fabulous Sitar player and Vocalist. He was master of melody and laykari and had a great collection of gats set to various ragas and talas. In those days, he charged such high fees that only Maharajas and Nawabs could engage him. My father Amulya Chandra Mukherjee who was brought up in Varanasi was one of his pupils. I have heard that even famous performers could not lift the Sitar where Pashupatiji was present. Old men and music lovers of Varanasi would corroborate this even today.

(3) Then comes the **Lucknow gharana** led by Ustad Amir

Khan (Gwalior) and later by Hamid Husain Khan. This gharana flourished during the period of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. Another great Sitar player (using three mizrabs) was Vajpayiji whose gats were a treat to hear but were very difficult to play. From the Lucknow gharana emerged other players notable amongst whom was Ustad Yusuf Ali Khan also known as the Kalpi Sitarias. The author has had the privilege of listening to this great player. Very bold and masculine was his music and greatly captivating were the bandishes and their texture. He had a treasure house of compositions. Some players of the Lucknow gharana were perhaps the earliest to incorporate Thumri into the playing of Sitar.

(4) Then comes the **Indore gharana** of Sitar players whose leader and master trainer was none other than the fabulous Binkar Ustad Bande Ali Khan. He had trained up a brilliant band of Binkars like Majid Khan, Murad Khan, Latif Khan, Babu Khan, Wahid Khan. From these Binkars came well known Sitar players like Babu Khan himself, Rahim Khan, Rahmat Khan ( who migrcted to Dharwar ), and Muhmad Khan ( son of Wahid Khan Binkar and father of Rais khan Sitaria ) who was both a Binkar and Sitar player. Some of the readers may have heard his Sitar records. Abdul Halim Jafar Khan belongs to this tradition.

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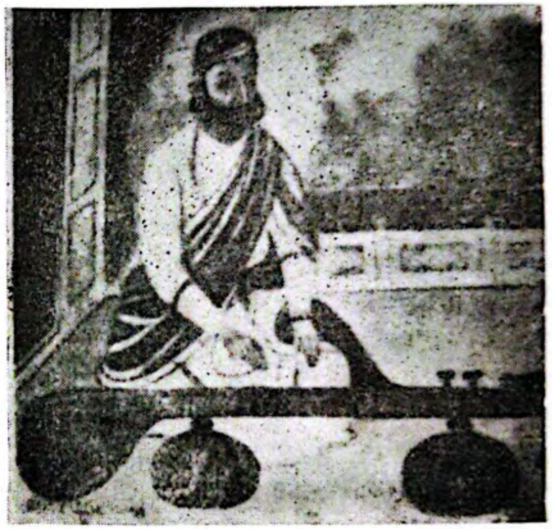
(5) There are two more Sitar gharanas which rose in Eastern India. The first and perhaps one of the most illustrious **gharanas was that of Pandit Bhagwan Chandra Das of Dacca.** Elaborate references to this great gharana have been made in the treatise "Musicians of India" by Harendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury, Zamindar of Mymensing now in Bangladesh. Bhagwan Das born in 1852 was senior to Imdad Khan and had a chequered and eventful career. The master musician of the gharana was Hari Charan Das a resident of Varanasi who had learnt Dhrupad, Bin and Sitar from the maestros of Varanasi and North India. He was brought to Dacca by the Nawab family of Dacca in the 18th Century. Hari Charan was followed by Chaitan Das, Ratan Chand Das whose sons were the great Sitar players Bhagwan Das and Shyam Das. Ratan Das also worked in Tripura State and trained up Rup Lal Roy who later trained up Bhagwan and Shyam Das in their formative years. Bhagwan Das also learnt from the well Known Sitar player Sultan Baksh particularly the Masitkhani style. Bhagwan Das was trained by master musicians like Kasem ali Khan (a direct descendant of Mia Tansen) Rababia, Sarodia Enayet Hussain, Murshed Ali Khan Binkar and Surbahari Ali Reza Khan. Bhagwan Das migrated to Mathura Brindavan and came in close contact with Emrat Khan Binkar of Jaipur, Taj Khan Dhrupadia and the great Pakhwaji Kudaw Singh. Bhagwan Das returned to Calcutta and trained up his brother Shyam Das and Indra Mohan. He won many distinctions and



Ustad Amait Sen Sitariya
( Son of Rahim Sen and descendent of Tansen )

was recognised as a Sitar maestro and also as a Surbahari and Binkar. Mahatma Gandhi first called him Bhagwan Das Sitari. Shyam Das trained his son Monomohan Das who spent his last days in Calcutta devoting his life and energy in propagating music. His young son Probir Sitari is trying to carry out his father's work. This tradition which has passed its prime had seriously cultivated the practice of the Bin, Surbahar and the Sitar. One often hears that many of the compositions of this gharana have been taken over by players of different schools.

Ustad Hafiz Khan Sitariye
( Jaipur / Pupil of Amrit Sen )

The other Sitar gharana in Bengal is a branch of the famous Vishnupur gharana of Dhrupad singers. Shri Gopeshwar Banerji apart from Dhrupad singing was also a Sitar player. The more famous players were Surendranath Banerji Surbahari, Satyakinkar Banerji and Gokul Nag.

(6) One of the most illustrious and luminous Sitar gharanas has been the **Etawah Gharana** better known as the **Imdad Khani Gharana**. Son of Sahadad Khan (who was a vocalist and a pupil of the celebrated Khayalias Haddu and Hassu Khan of Gwalior gharana), Imdad Khan had his training in vocal music from his father. But his heart lay in Sitar and so at the age of just twenty one years, he left home with his Sitar. So passionate was his love for music and Sitar in particular that he scorned all comforts and led a very hard life of distress but toiling his way to learn the art. In his search for music he went by turns to Amrit Sen of Jaipur and Bande Ali Khan Binkar. Legend has it that these Ustads were reluctant to teach any outsider but Imdad Khan was not a person to relent. He kept on listening to these maestros and imbibed their music and compositions as best as he could. He went to other music centres also but finally went to Varanasi where he went into "akhand riyaz." He would miss nothing not even the folk songs in Melas,the snakes charmers swaying music, the rhythm and banis of great kathak dancers and finally sitting under the railway bridge over the Ganges bridge would carefully listen to the rhythmic effects produced by the mail trains, express trains, goods trains passing over the bridge at various speeds. It is a real fantasy that the great Imdad Khan built up gats, tanas and upaj from these rhythms and finally gave the country a totally new, a revolutionary baaz of Sitar.

Imdad Khan did not stop here. In Calcutta, he closely followed the great Surbahar player Sajjad Muhmad ( who had then turned blind ) and developed his own style of playing the Surbahar where he combined the styles of Bin ( Bande Ali Khan ) and Surbahar ( Sajjad Muhmad ). Imdad was followed a brilliant set of descendents each rising to newer heights of glory and musical excellence—Enayat Khan of revered memory, Wahid Khan Surbahari, Vilayat Khan Sitaria a legend in his lifetime who is often described as the "Badshah" of Sitar, Imrat Khan the famous Sitaria and Surbahari and the younger Sitar player of this generarion, Shujaat Khan, Nishat Khan, Irshad Khan. This gharana has shown great resilience and powers of adaptability besides their strong classical base and have trained many good disciples.

(7) Yet another and highly distinguished gharana of comparatively recent origin is the **Maihar Sitar gharana** originated by one of India's greatest music maestros Ustad Allaudin Khan of revered memory. Though basically a a Sarodia himself, the great master was a unique combination of a teacher and performer. It is indeed a tribute to his versatile talim in both vocal and instrumental styles received from the scions of the Rampur gharana particularly Ustad Wazir Khan that he could train up bright artists in various instruments like Sarod, Sitar, Violin, Guitar and others. This was definitely a new style of great richness and variety and his great strength lay in his willingness to teach whoever went to him with a mentality to learn. It is here that he totally differed from the traditional Ustads of India who were basically secretive by nature and temperament, transmitting their learning and knowledge to their sons and near relations only. What untold damage this has done to the dissemination and survival of musical education and training is beyond description. It is, bluntly put, like a procession of very learned Ustads being able to transmit, only some of their knowledge to their relatives ( not all of them being competent or well deserving ) and finally walking with their storehouse of knowledge to their graves ! What a narrowminded and selfish way of dealing with a vibrant art like music ? All this Ustad Allaudin Khan broke with just one stroke. His saintly devotion to art was such that ( as history has proved several times in the past ) he was blessed with very gifted and exceptionallg talented disciples led by his great son Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, his son-in-law Pundit Ravi Shankar and his disciple Nikhil Banerjee the last two being Sitar players of outstanding merit who came out from a gharana of Sarodias, Ustad Allaudin was not only a great maestro himself but a versatile teacher judged by the toughest standards. His own training from his teachers and his innovative mind opened up new vistas of teaching and training. This perhaps explains why his trio of great disciples have distinctive separate styles of playing ( with some common features no doubt ) but with also clearly different musical personalities. In this gharana, if the baaz of Sitar has lost something of the specialities and traditions of Sitar baaz it has gained much more from other instrumental forms by way of both experimentation and innovation.

Innovation and search for new frontiers have perhaps cost the Sitar players of this gharana terse criticism but perhaps one has to concede that music cannot be stationary, nor can listener's tastes remain static. Two more points regarding the Sitar players of this gharana deserve mention. The first is the great facility with which the players present their music in uncommon and off beat talas and the unique improvisation and rhythmic variations in their tanas. This phenomenon was not to be found in Sitar gharanas of the past. Still, however, there are many who maintain that Sitar is best played in the basic talas like Teental, Rupak, Jhaptal and Ektaal. The other talas, obviously, belong to the domain of Dhrupad and Rudra Bin. They are many who may not agree with this view.

The second feature is the great work done by Sitar players of this gharana to propagate classical Indian music in the

Western countries. Prior to Independence, some conventional Ustads did visit European Countries. But the present effort has been more sustained in the sense that music has been presented both on the commercial and cultural platform. It is too premature at present to opine whether Indian classical music has really struck roots in the Western or American mind. Experience shows that by and large, the listeners in the West are the non resident Indians who have settled down there. It is true that some propagation of music has surely taken place through the chain of schools set up there. Yet the basic question remains—will the initial interest shown by the Westerners, more by way of curiousity or inquisitiveness be sustained in the future ? Let us not shrink from the fact that the ethos of Indian Music cannot be created in all its facets in the West and the Western musical mind is basically harmony oriented and the concept and application of swaras and shrutis of Indian Raga system, try as we might, are likely remain alien to them. Still however, lot of praise and acclaim is due to the stalwarts, who ventured into this bold and novel enterprise. It is, however, for posterity to pass the final judgment whether the enterprise achieved concrete results or was an over ambitions exercise. But one distinct development that has emerged is that Western scholars and musicians having interest in music have been coming to India sometimes to learn from exponents of other gharanas but more often to carry out research into various facets of Indian Music like Dhrupad traditions, Alap techniques, the science of rhythm in our music and study of Rudra Bin gharanas, playing styles and so on. If Max Muller could could give India back its Vedanta philosophy and the glory of the Vedas, who knows that some Western scholar will not reacquaint us with some of our musical traditions like Rudra Bin, Dhrupad and rare instruments ? While we are often goaded by an urge to imitate and emulate the West by even changing the classical presentation styles to suit their liking the West somehow appears to be more concerned with the real classics of India and they come all the way to India to ascertain and identify the roots and genesis of our classical musical heritage. These are points to ponder over.

The issues raised above are really not strictly relevant to Sitar gharanas but a reference to them appeared necessary in the context of the rather heavy preoccupation of musicians of this country to spread and popularise classical music in West. The Westerners have basically an empirical mind and after trying with our music as a pastime they will turn round and want to go into the basics and roots of our music. This is the only reason why people from the West—students, teachers, scholars—come to India on carry out research into

Pandit Monomohan Sitari
( Son of Shyam Das Sitari and cousin of Bhagban Das )

our music. Mere presentation of Indian Music with innovations appropriate to Western listeners cannot but dilute its traditional authenticity. This is not meant to be any criticism because some element of adaptation, or innovation is bound to reduce the pristine and traditional authenticity of our music. Let us leave this matter at that.

In conclusion, reference may be made to smaller Sitar gharanas. The **Darbhanga Sitar gharana** which was Dhrupad based produced great players like Rameswar Pathak. The Punjab also produced great Bin and Sitar players like Abdul Aziz Khan and Mohmad Sharif. These were local gharanas and did not spread out very much.

Ustad Imdad Khan Sitariya
( Etawah / Calcutta Indore )

One final word about Sitar gharanas. During the last fifty years or so, the technical excellence of the Sitar as an instrument has reached great heights particularly in Bengal and Calcutta. In the cultural explosion of the last 50 years one result has been a boom in "Sitar export" to all parts of the world.

All said and done, the one fact that stands out is that the current trends just cannot be reversed. New forces and perhaps a new music/Sitar culture has established itself. The Sitar is about the most popular stringed musical instrument today and the country is literally teeming with Sitar players. The hard situation is that there are a few celebrities at the top [ the Sitar stars ], a very large number of performing artists in the middle variously built musically and enjoying some sort of support for concert appearances, and thousands of young aspirants who are struggling somehow to get a foothold in the stringed world. It takes all sorts to make a representative crowd of Sitar players. Somewhere in this vast world of Sitar music are some very competent, well trained and 'Sadhak' Sitar players who deserve our salutation for the simple reason that their chastity, passion and Sadhana are the best known means to sustain, perpetuate and keep alive the classical parampara. Fame, name, wealth are no doubt yardsticks of both talent and excellence, but in this competitive world with uneven opportunities and different temperamental make up of artists there is a mismatch between real excellence and fame or name. Repeated opportunities of exposure is a passport to fame and name. But talent and excellence are not the personnl preserve or monopoly of the more famous artists alone. The Sitar musical firmament does have stars who have great depth and excellence but have not been properly "concertised" or "displayed" to be known better by the very large body of music lovers or the press. They are, however, equally great like the celebrities and their contribution to the patient upkeep of tradition must not be ignored or overlooked. We must consider that there are aberrations in the competitive and publicity oriented music world. As in a national struggle or a war' victory certainly does not belong to those who hold aloft the flag of victory but to those who have fallen for the flag. It is a moot question, how many Sitar players do we have who have stood for the classical tradition and classical flag !

Another interesting development should not escape our attention. Speaking generally, "adverturism" and "off beat experimentation" have made far greater inroads into Sitar and instrumental music than in Khayal music where, for certain compelling reasons, the 'forms' have to be maintained and cannot be easily thrown aside. Khayal bandishes are much much more classical and traditional today than instrumental bandishes. The norms require that the Khayals be sung in full both Asthai and Antara. In case of Sitar and Sarod, the bandishes are not always really traditional and regrettably, in many cases, are a "pretext" only to get the Tabla player started. This explains the abundance of one line Masitkhani and Rezakhani gats, the free use of Khayals as gats, and sometimes even "tehais" as gats.

Another notable feature is that 'off beat' ragas, whose form and features are not properly known or time tested, are becoming far too common and the basic ragas are being condemned to perpetual neglect. It is free for all and nobody is bothered about this. The standard defence offered is that raga music cannot remain stationary. Is it not true, on the other hand, that many half-trained and adventurist performers feel more safe, comfortable and secure in the shady surroundings offered by these outlandish ragas and are really afraid to perform in the conventional ragas where excellence or mistakes can be easily detected ? Why again so much fascination for off beat talas where careful scrutiny will show that the pieces are played arithmetically to make for the number of beats ? Thus 10 matras or 14 matras will be played as 8+2 or 12+2 and so on. Even beginners are trying their hands in this new art. One would like to know

from where this inspiration comes. It is also a moot question—what has gone wrong with basic talas of 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 14 and 15 beats ? The situation is baffling. Perhaps it is the desire for 'newness'. Perhaps it is a simple defiance of the classical tradition itself. These days one can get away with almost anything.

This is the retribution the present and the future must pay for excessive innovativeness, adventurism, craze for speed and the artificial divorcing of the soul of music from its body. All of us must assume collective responsibility for this near chaotic situation—the Celebrities, the artists at all levels, music organisers, the media, and surely a large section of the fast multiplying body of listeners. What a tragedy that nothing but music of a particular brand or "track" will only be considered pleasing and will be accepted. The situation is as absurd as insisting that only one or two flowers must make up a garden. Nothing else should be allowed to flower tnere. Music is an art of fantastic colours, variety, and possibilities. The silence of the powers that be on this point will not condone this tyranny and atrocity on the art of music. Nobody would like to be a prophet of gloom and despair. Let us not forget that forty or fifty years is nothing much in the life of an ancient and classical art. The human heart will always have that yearning for the sublime and the beautiful. The human spirit, as history has shown again and again, will rise in protest and in time deal a crushing blow to reckless adventurism and cheap exhibitionism in music. It is nobody's case that innovation has no place in art, but innovation has always been born out of tradition through human imagination. Tradition, let us remember, is a much stronger force than all that we see going on in the field of music. Time is not only a great healer but also a great a tester. The future alone will show whether some of the present entertaining, spicy and exhibitionist music—a very very strong force today—will supercede both tradition and the deep foundations of our musical culture. There is time still to make amends. Let us fondly hope that by the time the 21st Century breaks upon us, our respect and loyalty to tradition will be strong and the leaders of music will continue bold and constructive experimentation. All this is being mentioned here for the simple reason that Sitar music and all instrumental music have ramifications which go far beyond national or local appreciation, support and patronage.

## CHAPTER 19
## EPILOGUE

Much have we seen of the musical scenario and covered some of the major facets of our classical musical system. Much have we discussed issues and aspects which are controversial, highly debatable on which perhaps an easy unanimity of views or understanding is not possible. That surely has not restrained us from an objective and dispassionate examination of the issues and bringing up a number of possible views which can be held quite legitimately. The basic objective, as we have stated repeatedly of producing this book, is to provoke and stimulate thinking so that some of our friends might come out with their perceptions and understanding of the issues.

Our classical music, no longer caged, has very much come out in the open in various forms, shapes, colours and shades. Classical music is a quite widely talked about subject and experience shared throughout the length and breadth of our country. Through its propagation and exposure to the West, it has crossed national frontiers conquering the barriers of boundaries, of cultures, and now occupies an important place in the international forum of art and music.

Quantitative expansion of such phenomenal dimension, in such a short time span, cannot but have brought far reaching changes in all aspects—quality, manner of presentation, audience expectations, consumption of music by varied intersts, professionalism in music, higher status for performers, increased earnings and opportunities, conferment of awards rise of a new class of promoters, organisers, impressarios, rise of different varieties of artists catering to the needs and special urges of various types of audiences, the emergence of a class of music and art critics, greater concertisation of music and arts and finally much greater coverage of classical music by the media exemplified in the press, journals, All India Radio and Doordarshan.

All these are really developments on quantitative aspects. On the qualitative aspects, perhaps, more penetrating studies will be necessary to assess the net result of all the expansion that has gone on for the last forty to fifty years or so. We might attempt in this concluding epilogue to identify which particular aspects need to be more closely looked into, monitored and manipulated, if necessary, with the help of the government, the corporate music promoters, the media and the like. The idea may perhaps sound utopian but nothing except an all sided approach will help classical music, in the present vastly changed ethos, to regain and recapture its glory, its rightful place in the life and thought of the Indian people.

Since we have had some discussion on most of these aspects in this book, sometimes in a sense of despair and sometime in a glow of hope, it would be better if we just demarcate and specify the issues which will merit greater attention and study—

(i) The authenticity of the music presented—in structure, form, composition, note production and their combination. In other words, the comformity or faithfulness to the form of music which is sought to be presented.

(ii) The sanctity and purity of the Ragas or melodies that are presented. Innovation is an accepted virtue in our system but the basic purity and form of the common and recognisable ragas must be maintained. Funny it may seen now but time was when a Binkar or Surbahari before opening his Raga Alap used to softly sing a short composition—Dhrupad. Sadra or khayal—in the Raga which was being presented. This left no doult about the form and essence of the Raga.

(iii) Perhaps some thought has to be bestowed on the dangerous growth of self created Ragas, hybrid melodies in the name of newness or innovation. The law of time is a shrewd judge and most of such melodies fail to stand the test of time, to which of course there are very brilliant and glorious exceptions.

(iv) More workshops and seminars on basic facets of classical music at different levels and locations will become necessary to evolve some sort of common understanding of some of these issues. More informed association of the youth community through the Universities and Spicmacay with these workshops and seminars will become urgently necessary. The days of many of the knowledgeable old timers will be over sooner or later and younger people have to be the new torch bearers of our classical tradition for the future.

(v) Properly devised Music Appreciation courses for various age groups based partly on lectures, partly on illustrations, followed by a free question and answer session will be necessary. Mention may be made here of a special Music Appreciation course conducted by the West Bengal State Music Academy in end—1988 which involved selection, by advertisment of participants of relevant age groups selection of about twenty subjects spread over forty lecturers on which eminent artists and musicologists addressed the target group followed by question and answer session. The course covered forms of music other than classical but the basic thrust was on our traditional music and its philosophy, evolution, culture and development. A feed back obtained form the selected participants indicated encouraging results. The list of subjects covered by this Music Appreciation course is encolsed for ready reference (vide Appendix).

(vi) Much more improvement and refinement have to come in the field of musical criticism on which a chapter has been devoted in this book. All we need is to devolop norms of reporting, precise assessment, constructive criticism and fearlessness, impartiality and objectivity in reporting.

(vii) Our extraordinary preoccupation with export and propagation of music abroad will perhaps require a second look as also the Utsavs and Festivals. While these well planned activities have very very strong points in their favour in promoting cultural exchange and carrying the message of Indian culture and music to distant lands, one point which is often missed is that the cultural ethos the world over is not the same. More importantly, music, culture and art should not be construed as a simple item of export to which the latest "packaging techniques" must be devetailed. Any excessive activity in this direction may prove to be counter productive and may bring art and music to a place to which they do not belong. Comments are already being made deploring the bunching of classical music with "tamashas", rural, folk arts, regional dances and arts. In the dazzle and glamour of the latter, classical music which is a serious art is hardly likely to get the respect it deserves. There is perhaps a good case for segregating the two,

(viii) Some serious and long term plan to restore Guru Shishya parampara to facilitate oral transmission of knowledge has to be thought of in the basic disciplines of music like khayal, Thumri, Dhrupad, Sitar, Bin, Sarod etc. One or two sporadic efforts like the Sangit Research Academy are no doubt a beginning but both qualitatively and quantitavely a lot more has to done to be produce any perceptible effect on the transmission of traditional music.

(ix) We have a music heritage and corresponding responsibilities. One basic step in transmission of musical knowledge and compositions to the future lies in strengthening and expanding on regional basis, Archival Recordings, of the masters who are no more and recording of as much of the music of existing and aging masters as possible. Any delay in fulfilling this responsibility will have suicidal effect. With the present facilites opened up by the electronics revolution, the transfer of old recording and new recordings in a form that will last for many many years should present no problems at all.

The author as a performing artist in the field of stringed instrumental music submits with a sense of great embrassment and delicacy that this field, where phenomenal progress has taken place both nationally and internationally requires careful scrutiny. With our heads bowed almost in shame let us admit that, superficial progress and achievements apart, this is perhaps the only area in our classical musical system where dilution and adulteration have taken place in the name of innovation and popularisation of classical music. The Raga and Tala systems have been interfered with. The real "Forms"—in practically all fields starting with Raga Alap to the finale of speed and riot—have not been kept up. Worse still, the sequence or stages of music presentation have been totally upset. What often is sought to be presented as Alap in many cases is not Alap at all the Jod is a mere apology for the genuine Jod techniques. The Masit khani gats have got actually derailed and now represent a miming of some khayal movements, entertaninig note combinations and profuse use of tehais and sapat tanas at top speed as part of the Masitkhani outfit. The Rezakhani gats are just an imitation of faster khayals and Taranas full of tanas and crazy heights of speed in chikari. The mizraf or plectrum do not speak of 'bols' of tantrakari but are used as a means of sound creation and reaching the familiar areas of acrobaties and speed. One feels lost and helplessly wants to know where are our leaders of music, where are the teachers who will guide the pupils ? The embarassing feature is that the new trends have nearly come to stay.

The majority of the celebrities and middle level performers have taken to the new style and the defenceless audience has got almost "brainwashed" in the last three or four decades. There appears to be almost a ring of barricade where even some established artists are unable to reach the concert stage for their sin of being authentic and remaining within the classical mainstream. We shout from house tops that we stand for classics but never a voice is heard in protest against the adulteration, glaring aberrations, unfettered disregard of the rules of the classical system.

Classical music is now a business pure and simple and must live by laws of demand and supplies. The stakes are too great and the artists have to make a living. When and how classical music will build up its defence only time will show. It will be a colossal tragedy if the position that finally emerges is that the classics have lost the battle under the pressure of public demands and manipulation by powerful vested interests. It has to be admitted that never in the past classical music, inspite of the present massive expansion and outward show of progress, has had to face the dilemma it is facing today. One can only hope for the best in the future. This is certainly not an outlook of gloom and despair but an effort only at understanding what has been happening to classical music, particularly in the field instrumental music, during recent decades.

There is one point which is perhaps latent in the hearts of many performing musicians living far away from New Delhi the capital city of the country. That point or grievance is the absence of equality of chances and opportnnity (1) of performing in the concerts at New Delhi (2) of being fairly considered for cultural tours abroad (3) of coming to the notice of the powers that be for the purposes of recognition and conferment of awards etc. New Delhi is not only the seat of political government where the fate of politicians, commercial houses and of many organisations are decided. It is also the seat of State patronage for the fine arts through a very wide network of semi govt and govt agencies. Connections more than talent are more relevant and whoever can catch the eye of the powers that be finally wins. As in other fields of activities, artists who either reside in or operate from Delhi are decidedly at an advantage. It is unfortunately true that those artists who showed the foresight of 'pitching' their tents early enough at Delhi ( say in the fifties or sixties or even later ) have had more than their legitimate share of state patronage whether it be prestigious concert bookings, giving performances at high places at the capital, inclusion in any number of cultural delegations and benefits of other types all of which cannot be reproduced here.

It certainly cannot be the intention of the Govt. or of those in positions of authority that benefits not always connected with standing, talent and excellence should be distributed thus. This is very far from being any criticism of Govt. or authority. It is only to ventilate the deep feeling of disappointment from which senior, and well established artists living far away from Delhi suffer. Having worked in senior govt. positions the author quite often was asked different inconvenient question. A typical question for instance was—are we to be ignored just because we do not live in Delhi and have no connections there? The government belongs to the whole country, why must we have even a feeling that we are not being looked after fairly? A much more embarassing question asked by the more desperate people is whether the authorities at Delhi will ever try to see beyond their nose? This was the unkindest cut of all!

The author has, however, held that in a country of India's size there can be aberrations and slippages and no one can really claim to be perfect at all times and in all respects. It is however, both pertinent and relevant that the existing scheme/system of making benefits available to performing artists, depending on their grade and standing perhaps needs a re-examination if only to allay doubts and suspicion some of which might or might not be really justified. The author would repeat once again, with all the emphasis at his command that the submissions made above do not constitute any criticism of any authority or policy but a statement only of certain viewpoints expressed in some quarters now and then.

One rather significant point will bear mention in this concluding chapter. We often come accross some groups/organisations/individuals carrying music troupes or select band of artists as annual ritual to foreign countries under some mutually arranged scheme. Surely these trips involve substantial release of foreign exchange by the Central Govt. Since the entire system is not widely or clearly known, one is curious to know is there, in existence, a system of duality under which govt./Semi Govt. organisations like ICCR, Festival Committee as well as private agencies may carry on the export of classical music and propagate music abroad.

Art promotion abroad comes within the jurisdiction of our foreign policy and foreign relations. The Central Govt. also have a cultural policy regarding cultural exchanges and propagation of art abroad. The current system of duality is unfair for the general body of artists except those ( belonging to a favoured fraternity ) since there are no norms or yardsticks of selection in so far as private agencies are concerned. Obviously the benefits will not be evenly or fairly distributed.

The point that is sought to be made here is three fold (a) art promotion abroad is within the domain of foreign relations (b) the expenditure of foreign exchange is involved where usually very strict norms are known to be applicable

(c) The Central Govt. never allows duality of control or participation in foreign policy and relations to even constitutionally elected State Govts. let alone private agencies.

If free private participation in music promotion abroad is allowed, the fears expressed that Govt. is abdicating its responsibilities will not perhaps appear to be totally unfounded. Do we have to believe even for once, that a sovereign national Govt. with a vibrant foreign policy, massive infrastructure of the Ministry of External Affairs the large number of Missions abroad, the giant infrastructure of the ICCR—cannot fully manage cultural promotion abroad and must depend upon some self styled private music promoters ? It is really one thing for private sponsorship or participation in music promotion within the country. But if the phenomenon is repeated abroad the implications and ramifications would be totally different. May we suggest that the Ministry of Culture and ICCR have this matter scrutinised afresh and bring out guide lines to allay the fears and suspicion amongst very many performing musicians about what has been going on and what the proper policies and procedures should be. In such matters we must not talk of persons and their contacts or influence but of a definite system which will meet national requirements and the bonafide aspirations of the large body of performing musicians. This is not a field where the present situation of drift should be allowed to continue.

As against some of these unfavourable views expressed regarding distribution of patronage by government and semi-govt. agencies it has to be remembered and acknowledged with gratitude the phenomenal service, support and massive help extended by govt. to classical music in so many ways. The large-scale employment provided to musicians, the huge infrastructure of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, the giant network of the All India Radio and Doordarshan, the chain of various Academies and Institutions, the Network of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the cultural work done by the Indian Missions abroad represent a continuing interest and concern of the Govt. for Music and the Fine Arts. Nor is this all. The different State Govts. following the example set by the Govt. of India have also fostered the growth of classical music. Almost all the State Govts. have their Academies of Music and Dance, Departments of Cultural Affairs, conferment of awards and titles to senior and outstanding artists. Taken together, all this adds upto something very considerable without which, let us admit, our classical music would have been in a state of neglect and wilderness. The Universities with their Faculties of Performing Arts have also been doing very useful work in the teaching and propagation of classical music.

Classical music qualitatively is under great stress and strain and literally at the crossroads of history. This is however only a passing phase and the cycle will take a full turn in the forseable future. The author is of the firm conviction that classical music will regain its traditional glory and become an integral part of the life and thought of the Indian people.

Let us always remember one basic value. Raga music is only an expression of the human soul. The ancient musical tradition we have carries that soul. If we are prepared to discard or mutilate our musical tradition we are only damaging our soul. If the soul departs, we shall be left only with a structure, a skeleton. That is wny we must never abandon our traditions which have, for thousands of years, sustained the soul of our music.

## APPENDIX

List of twenty subjects spread over forty lectures on Music Appreciation Course conducted by the West Bengal State Music Academy in 1988

1. The Evolution of Indian Classical Music.
2. The Beauty and Diversity of classical Music—the place of tala, laya and rhythm.
3. The Musical system and Texts of Ancient and Middle Ages, and discussion on available texts.
4. Raga and Aesthetics.
5. A comparison of the Indian society and Western Society in regard to system of melody and rhythm.
6. The Indian Notation System and Western Staff notation system.
7. The relation between political upheavals and the development of Indian classical Music.
8. The changing Social Scene and impact on Music.
9. Music and its philosophical concept.
10. Music and public awareness.
11. The rapport between Vocal and Instrumental Music
12. Orchestration and the synthesis between the instrumental styles of the Orient and the West.
13. Lyric and literary music as reflectted in songs of Bengal.
14. Role of music composer in giving musical from to lyrical songs.
15. Social Progress and Music.
16. Modern India and classical Music.
17. Classical Music and Creativity.
18. Auditory perception and its psychophysical impact.
19. Folk Music and Social life.
20. Musical Excellence and popular acceptance and reaction.

Shri Bimal Mukherjee's music is a fine blend of classical tradition and creativity. Pupil of Pandit Pashupati Missir, Ustad Jamaluddin Khan Binkar, Ustad Abid Hussain Binkar, Shri Mukherjee has had the fortune of receiving guidance from Ustad Fayyaz Khan.

Shri Mukherjee has performed in prestigious concerts in the country including AIR, T V and Records and Cassettes. He had been to U S A and Canada as the leader of Indian Cultural Ensemble. He has also served on different bodies like Sangit Natak Academy, Universities, Boards and Councils.

With a brilliant academic career, he has served as one of the senior members of the I A S. To crown it all, his present book is a serious attempt at presenting an authentic and comparative assessment of various trends and influences those have been playing a powerful role in different areas of Hindusthani Classical Music.

Perhaps an overall appraisal was overdue and this is exactly what Shri Mukherjee has attempted here.